Commentary
July-August 2001

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Gary Milhollin & Kelly Motz

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Terry Teachout

Books in Review
Tod Lindberg • Ruth R. Wisse • Nicholas Rostow
Brian C. Anderson • Rhoda Rabkin

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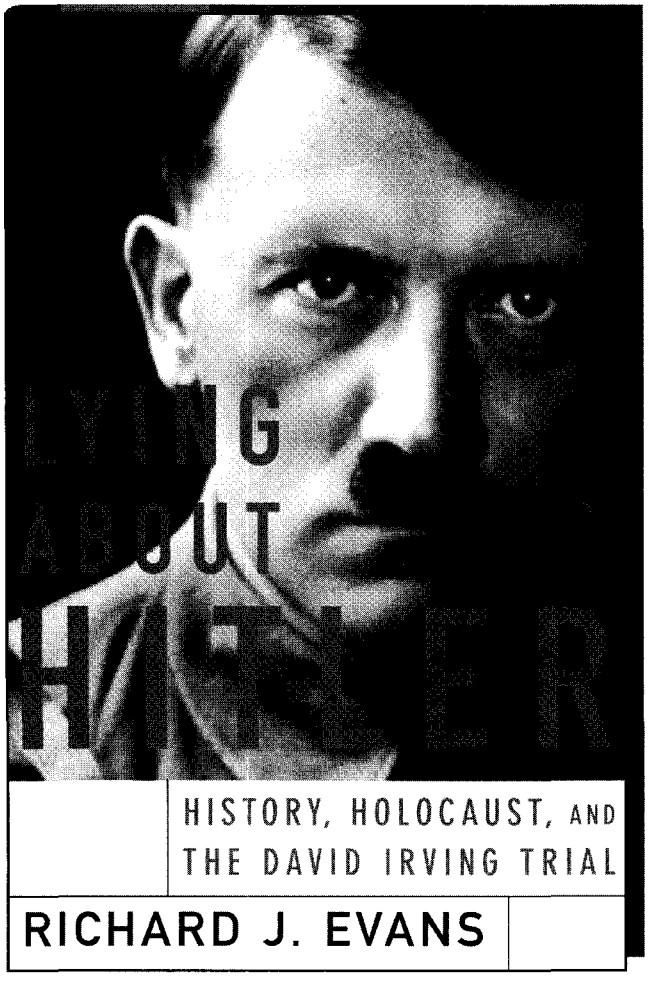

LYING ABOUT HITLER

HISTORY, HOLOCAUST, AND THE DAVID IRVING TRIAL

Richard J. Evans

Last year, David Irving brought a libel suit against Penguin Books UK and author Deborah Lipstadt, who had denounced Irving in print as one of the most dangerous Holocaust deniers at work today. As the chief historical adviser to the publisher in its successful defense of Lipstadt, Richard J. Evans uses the trial to explore a range of vital questions about Hitler and the Holocaust, but also about historical objectivity in general. In a series of sharp chapters, Evans takes the specific issues of the trial and shows exactly how Irving's writings distorted the historical record to serve his own revisionist agenda. In the process, Evans sheds light not only on history but on the entire historical process.

Richard J. Evans is Professor of Modern History at Cambridge University.

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Commentary
July-August 2001

Letters from Readers

Animals & Us

To the Editor:

In "Rights for Rodents" [April], Damon Linker correctly says that Western legal systems uniformly regard the million species of nonhuman animals as things, like my computer keyboard and monitor. But he is wrong that this is because nonhuman animals do not understand morality. Legally they are things for two reasons. Centuries ago, most Westerners believed nonhuman animals lacked reason, intellect, thought, and belief, or even the abilities to perceive, remember, or experience. It was just as commonly assumed that, in the hierarchical universe, nonhuman animals had been divinely placed on earth for the use of humans, as women lived for men, and slaves for their masters.

No reputable scientist believes these things today. None has for a very long time. Meanwhile, discoveries illuminating the complexities of nonhuman minds cascade in from field stations and laboratories. Bonobos understand thousands of English words. Chimpanzees have a theory of mind, and have cultures to boot. Dolphins understand syntax. Orangutans are self-aware. Dogs have emotions. Millions of nonhuman animals lead complex lives that matter to them. They are conscious. They desire and act to fulfill their desires. They have a sense of self strong enough to allow them to know that their life is theirs and can go well or ill. They can suffer and experience desperate fear.

Mr. Linker insists this is all irrelevant; legal rights turn on whether one can be "led by a love of justice and a sense of self-worth [to] insist that the world recognize and respect [one's] dignity." But why should that incredibly sophisticated cognitive ability determine whether one may be killed or enslaved at whim? And what of the hundreds of millions of humans who do not qualify because they are too young, too old, too retarded, too neurotic, or too morally obtuse? Are they to have legal rights merely because they belong to a species that contains some individuals who love justice, some who have a qualifying sense of self-worth? What justifies such species-wide affirmative action?

Mr. Linker also libels as misanthropes those who struggle for the legal rights of nonhuman animals. Did the 19th-century abolitionists hate whites, or did they hate black slavery? They saw that black rights were white rights. Did the 20th-century suffragette hate men, or the disenfranchisement of women? Women's rights were men's rights. Does the 21st-century advocate of gay rights hate heterosexuals, or the oppression of homosexuals? Gay rights are straight rights. The animal-rights advocate is not anti-human. Like his forebears, he hates brutal tyranny. Animal rights are human rights.

Steven M. Wise
Needham, Massachusetts

To the Editor:

Damon Linker vastly inflates the significance of the agreement the U.S. Department of Agriculture has reached with a group of animal advocates, the effect of which is that mice and rats will be recognized as "animals" under the Animal Welfare Act of 1966. This means, he says that "rodents are now to receive equal rights."

Well, yes—equal rights with those of other laboratory animals, who, like rats and mice, may be poisoned to death in order to test a new food coloring or preservative. Is that such a big deal? Is that the "biggest victory so far for the animal-rights movement"? One should hope not.

Every other industrialized country in the world already includes rats and mice

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in regulations that cover animals used in experiments. It was not an animal-liberation publication but an opinion article last year in the world's leading science journal, *Nature*, that said that some of the arguments used by the American research lobby against the proposed inclusion of rodents "verge on the reactionary."

Indeed, the inclusion of rodents under the protection of the Animal Welfare Act is not really an expansion of the scope the Act appeared to have when it was amended over 30 years ago to include all species of warm-blooded laboratory animals designated by the Secretary of Agriculture. It was not until the Department of Agriculture published its regulations in 1976, and they did not cover rats and mice, that it was realized that even though these rodents are clearly "warm-blooded laboratory animals," they were not going to be covered by the legislation. What was agreed to in October of last year was simply a belated recognition that rats and mice had been excluded from the regulations for no good reason.

The fact that the United States fails even to include rats and mice—the vast majority of all laboratory animals—in regulations governing the treatment of such animals makes it, in the eyes of scientists around the world, a callous nation, as far as animal protection is concerned. For Mr. Linker to defend this situation is clearly, as the *Nature* writer said, to side with the reactionaries.

PETER SINGER
Center for Human Values
Princeton University

TO THE EDITOR:

Damon Linker haphazardly intermingles two distinct issues: a new ethical perspective on the interaction of animals and humans and legal protection for 95 percent of all laboratory animals used in biomedical research. Concerning the latter, the agreement between the Alternatives Research & Development Foundation (ARDF) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) simply fulfills a 30-year-old congressional mandate. In the words of former Senator Bob Dole (who is not an animal-rights activist), "As someone deeply involved with the process of revising and expanding the provisions of the [Animal Welfare Act], I assure you that [it] was meant to include birds, mice, and rats."

One of the unusual and surprising consequences of ARDF's efforts was the broad-based support extended by organizations and individuals not traditionally viewed as allies of the animal-advocacy movement. These ranged from the American Association for Laboratory Animal Science, to members of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee, to researchers who themselves specialize in using rats, mice, and birds.

Once the rule-making process resulting from the ARDF/USDA settlement is completed, there will be a number of firsts for laboratory animals in the United States. There will be unannounced inspections of all facilities; real legal consequences and sanctions for failures to care adequately for these animals; an accurate census of all species used in the laboratories; comprehensive information on the extent of pain and distress inflicted; the ability to track trends in the use of animals; universal consideration of alternatives; and a level playing field for all facilities and species.

JOHN MCARDLE
Director
Alternatives Research & Development Foundation
Eden Prairie, Minnesota

TO THE EDITOR:

Contrary to Damon Linker, it is not only in societies "founded on the recognition of the innate dignity of all members of the human race" that animals have enjoyed certain minimal protections. Countries like India, for example, have afforded far more protection to animals than has our own, which tends to mete out consideration on the basis of cuteness and familiarity—that is, we accept or reject cruelty depending on whether the victim is a chicken or a fluffy dog.

Mr. Linker invokes the old saw that humans are degraded if they afford animals any modicum of respect. Note that he is not weighing the issue of whether to give animals the right to vote (a thought, though, given how we do with elections). Rather, he is trying to scare people away from providing, to mammals as capable of experiencing pain and fear as he is, coverage under a grossly inadequate federal law requiring only that they be fed and watered, and that experimenters justify any infliction of pain.

This country has a sorry history of prejudice. U.S. experimenters have used as their research subjects orphans, enlisted soldiers, gypsies, prisoners of war, the institutionalized, and poor blacks, all without their consent. Not so long ago, we enslaved human beings, selling daughters away from mothers as dairy calves are sold today. Politicians opined that blacks were incapable of maternal love and, during the fight for women's suffrage, editorialists declared that mules might as well be given the vote. Even the disabled had to fight for a measly wheelchair ramp. Did these changes debase whites, men, or the able-bodied?

Past practices are easy to condemn. The challenge is to continue to identify prejudices and expand ethical horizons. As the philosopher Jeremy Bentham said, "The question is not, can they reason? Nor, can they talk? But can they suffer?" Animals can suffer, and we can stop some of that suffering.

Finally, while Mr. Linker attributes to me the original comparison of Holocaust victims to animals, it was the novelist Isaac Bashevis Singer who, having fled Nazi-occupied Europe, made the connection with shackled cattle being beaten and marched to their deaths in the slaughterhouse: "In relation to other creatures, all people are Nazis." While physiologically we are different from rats (they are used in research because they are small and cheap), when it comes to feelings like hunger, pain, and thirst, a rat is a dog is a pig is a boy. That is a biological fact, not a matter of opinion.

INGRID E. NEWKIRK
President
People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals
Norfolk, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR:

In accusing animal-rights supporters of being "anti-human," Damon Linker

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Great Minds of the Western Intellectual Tradition

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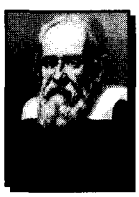
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raises an old canard. This accusation—and variants of it—has been around since 1880, when the Research Defense Society developed its propaganda tools against the antivivisection movement. Their first target was the well-known journalist Frances Power Cobbe, who was also the first to expose some of the horrors of domestic violence toward women in England and was responsible for getting the first law passed allowing women to divorce their husbands for beating them. In spite of her extraordinary record, the propagandists continued to attack her as "anti-human."

Other "anti-human" people who opposed vivisection include Elizabeth Blackwell (the first woman to receive an M.D. in the United States), Victor Hugo, John Ruskin, John Galsworthy, Thomas Carlyle, Robert Browning, Lewis Carroll, Samuel Johnson, Mark Twain, Cardinal Manning, George Bernard Shaw, and Drs. Albert Leffingwell, Dallas Pratt, Robert Mendelsohn, Robert Gesell, and Harvey Bigelow. Finally, there is Gandhi, that most famous anti-human of human beings, who called vivisection "the blackest crime the human race has ever committed."

Not only does Damon Linker exhibit an unfortunate ignorance of the history of the antivivisection movement and of the many stirring voices who have spoken on its behalf but, like most critics of the animal-rights movement, he indicates that he knows little or nothing of any organization opposing animal research other than People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and that he has not read any philosopher on the subject other than perhaps Peter Singer.

He even misquotes the statement of PETA president Ingrid Newkirk that "a boy is a rat is a chicken," etc., omitting Newkirk's qualifier, "with respect to pain." The statement is not so different from Maimonides' assertion that "With respect to the joys and sorrows the mother animal feels for her young, it is the same as the joys and sorrows the human mother feels for her young, for these feelings do not spring from the rational part of the brain but from the irrational part which all creatures are heir to."

ROBERTA KALECHOFSKY
President
Jews for Animal Rights
Marblehead, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

Damon Linker makes all the mistakes and is subject to all the same prejudices that have permeated the thinking of speciests for generations. In arguing that "until the day when a single animal stands up and, led by a love of justice and a sense of self-worth, insists that the world recognize and respect its dignity, all the philosophical gyrations of the activists will remain so much sophistry," he has taken it upon himself to determine the defining attributes that justify separating his own species from the less worthy ones. Just so, whites once determined that skin color should be the determinant of value to society, and men determined that sex and/or property ownership defined voting rights. But who is to say that language, rather than, for example, the ability to fly without the aid of aircraft, should be the arbiter of value and worth in our universe?

Arguments over animal subjugation always become a "game" in which the person saddled with the burden of proof is almost certain to be the loser. Steven M. Wise, in *Rattling the Cage*, has accepted this burden on behalf of a very select group of animals (bonobos) and has convincingly and painstakingly met it in a way that must persuade all but those few absolute zealots, like Damon Linker, for whom no amount of proof will likely ever be adequate.

FRED L. COHEN
Jupiter, Florida

TO THE EDITOR:

Overlooked in Damon Linker's essay is the truth that the animal-rights philosophy, carried to its logical conclusion, requires *more*, rather than less, human intervention in nature.

Male gorillas frequently kill gorilla infants that are not their own. Chimpanzees sometimes slay other chimps. If we grant these creatures rights, then we must concern ourselves with the prevention of such atrocities. Some animal liberationists have responded that, in effect, "those are other nations, we cannot interfere." But countries usually define themselves according to geographical boundaries. There would rightly be an extraordinary outcry about a white-ruled country that did not "interfere" in black-on-black crime within its borders, and if "speciesism" is analogous to racism we cannot look the other way when members of a given species commit crimes against one another.

DENISE NOE
Atlanta, Georgia

TO THE EDITOR:

Damon Linker is right to conclude that the animal-rights movement is inherently misanthropic and, if successful, would result in an "*increase* in man's inhumanity to man." Virtually all the animal-rights activists I met in my almost 40-year career as a professional physiologist were hypocrites when it came to accepting the consequences of their philosophical position. Thus, when asked if they would refuse to accept any medicine or undergo any procedure that had been developed using animal experimentation, they would invariably answer no.

Even Peter Singer, the world's strongest opponent of using animals in research, made a fervent plea on the *New York Times* op-ed page for pharmaceutical companies to make HIV/AIDS drugs available to African nations; all of these drugs were developed through the use of animal experimentation. Animal lovers might also note that their pets benefit from the same research that benefits humans, including those animal-rights activists who now want to deny the benefits of such research to future generations.

SHELDON F. GOTTLIEB
Boynton Beach, Florida

TO THE EDITOR:

Peter Singer, Steven M. Wise, and their ilk act as if the only alternative to their radical concept of animal rights is a world in which humans needlessly and heedlessly torture and mistreat animals. Judaism teaches there is a middle ground, instructing Jews and non-Jews alike to treat animals with compassion and sensitivity. A few examples:

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- A man must feed his animals before himself.
- One must show mercy and send away the mother bird before taking eggs from her nest.
- Two animals from different species are not to be yoked together for plowing lest hardship and pain be inflicted on the weaker of the two.
- Jews are not permitted to work their animals on the Sabbath.
- When animals are to be used for food, the ritual slaughter must be performed with the absolute minimum of pain.
- An animal and its offspring are not to be slaughtered on the same day.

These examples imply that Judaism believes animals have feelings beyond pain. In fact, this very issue is debated in the Talmud. Although no firm conclusion is reached, the proper treatment of animals does not rest on a finding that they do in fact have such "feelings." The point is this: if we are commanded to treat even "unfeeling" animals with respect, how much more sensitive should we be in our dealings with "feeling" humans?

SAMUEL SILVER
Co-Chairman
Toward Tradition
Greenville, Mississippi

DAMON LINKER writes:

Virtually all defenders of animal rights—including many of those aggrieved by my article—believe they are justified in equating the animal-rights movement with struggles for the legal equality of blacks, women, and even homosexuals. Such claims might make effective copy in fundraising letters, but they are intellectually dubious. In brief, the argument on which they are based—we used to deny equal rights to black and female human beings and now recognize that it was wrong to do so, therefore our denial of equal rights to animals is also wrong—assumes the prior validity of a highly contentious analogy: black and female human beings are equivalent to animals in morally relevant respects. It is precisely the validity of this analogy that I denied in my article, and that advocates of animal rights must defend.

Steven M. Wise knows this. That is why he devotes so much of his letter to listing "discoveries" purporting to demonstrate "the complexities of nonhuman minds." I will leave it to others to judge the significance of the fact that a handful of bonobos, after years of intense training by scientists, have apparently managed to "understand" "thousands" of words; to assess whether the "theory of mind" supposedly possessed by chimpanzees really deserves to be described in the same terms we use to talk about the philosophical writings of Descartes and Hegel; and to evaluate the appropriateness of attributing "self-awareness," "consciousness," and a "sense of self" to creatures who, lacking language, are utterly incapable of conceiving of such abstractions. For what it is worth, I suspect we will one day come to recognize that our readiness to attribute human capacities to creatures who so clearly lack them reflects far more about the boundless sentimentality of the present moment in history, as well as the current bankruptcy of human self-understanding, than it does about advances in scientific knowledge.

Mr. Wise has evidently been driven to distraction by my failure to be persuaded by the evidence he marshals in *Rattling the Cage* for the moral equality of human beings and bonobos, let alone my counterargument that legal rights should be limited to those creatures who are capable of being "led by a love of justice and a sense of self-worth [to] insist that the world recognize and respect" their dignity. "Why," he asks, "should that incredibly sophisticated cognitive ability determine whether one may be killed or enslaved at whim?" Because, I respond, if rights are to be something more than conventions that are bestowed (and that, conversely, can be taken away) by human fiat, they must be grounded in the innate dignity of individuals, the violation of which is an affront to the moral order of things. How do we know that human beings possess this dignity? Because they tell us they do.

Mr. Wise would have us believe that animals, too, possess dignity and suffer only from a minor, and morally insignificant, linguistic handicap; hence their need for professors of law at Harvard University to make their case for them. But that is not good enough. In standing up for bonobos, and using his own formidable verbal skills to try to establish their rights for them, Mr. Wise succeeds in demonstrating little more than that . . . he thinks bonobos have rights. The moral status of the bonobos themselves is unaffected by his efforts, and will remain so until, to repeat, a single bonobo stands up for its own dignity. If holding this position makes me an "absolute zealot," as Fred L. Cohen believes, then so be it. He should note, however, that zealotry is another human trait that no other animal exhibits.

Mr. Wise also wants to know on what basis I would defend the rights of human beings who are "too young, too old, too retarded, too neurotic, or too morally obtuse" to stand up for their own dignity. Surely, he asserts, these poor souls cannot be said to have legal rights "*merely* because they belong to a species that contains some individuals who love justice, some who have a qualifying sense of self-worth" (emphasis added). But much as Mr. Wise would like to apply his egalitarian individualism indiscriminately throughout the animal kingdom, he cannot wave away the significance of species so easily. The fact remains that humans have a moral potential that no member of any other species possesses. That particular human beings fail to actualize this potential is irrelevant; their dignity lies in belonging to a species that does.

Peter Singer, for his part, calls me a "reactionary." Coming from a man whose progressive morality sanctions abortion, euthanasia, infanticide, and bestiality, that is quite a compliment. I thank him for it. As for his more substantive claim, also made by John McArdle, that the recent agreement to cover mice and rats under the Animal Welfare Act is insignificant because it

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IN THE CURRENT ISSUE OF *PARTISAN REVIEW:*

"Save for a few near-retirement humanists and realist philosopher holdouts, academics embrace constructionist premises as catechism learning, axioms to be assimilated before one is inducted into the professoriate. To believe that knowledge is a construct, that truth, evidence, fact, and inference all fall under the category of local interpretation, and that interpretations are more or less right by virtue of the interests they satisfy is a professorial habit, not an intellectual thesis."

— Mark Bauerlein, "Social Constructionism in Academia"

And:

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merely fulfills the Act's original intention, I am unpersuaded.

Mice and rats were excluded from the Act (until the ARDF court action) because the USDA rightly concluded that the costs of regulating the treatment of these animals would stifle research that greatly benefits human beings. As one can clearly see from the long list of forthcoming regulations that Mr. McArdle cheerfully includes in his letter, these concerns were well-founded. Such regulations will indeed go a long way toward creating a "level playing field for all . . . species." It was this that I meant to expose in my article.

Both Ingrid E. Newkirk and Roberta Kalechofsky correct me for quoting the former out of context; when she said "a rat is a pig is a dog is a boy," she meant only "with respect to pain." Fair enough, but only up to a point. Can rats and pigs and dogs experience pain? Obviously. Is that experience qualitatively identical to the pain that a human child experiences? That is far less obvious, and hardly a "biological fact," as Ingrid Newkirk would have it. Short of advanced communication with animals about their experience of suffering and its meaning in their lives, such claims are nothing more than idle speculation.

I tried in my article to give some indication of the extraordinary range of human experience—of how "ideas of virtue and vice, beauty and ugliness, right and wrong" transform our experience of mere pain and pleasure into something wholly unique in the natural world. It is the utter blindness, and even outright hostility, to these core aspects of our humanity among many animal-rights activists—and none more so than Ingrid Newkirk—that led me to describe them and their project as "anti-human."

Denise Noe is right to point out that, were animals granted rights, we would indeed be morally obligated to become the peacekeepers of the animal kingdom, lest those rights be violated by other animals. One might add that, since animals are incapable of recognizing and respecting one another's intrinsic dignity, they would remain dependent on us to keep the peace in perpetuity.

I would like to express my appreciation for the support of Sheldon F. Gottlieb and Samuel Silver. The latter, in particular, provides an extremely helpful discussion of a genuinely humane way to conceive of our relationship to animals—one that would lead to decency without the debasement of mankind.

Jacob of Ancona

TO THE EDITOR:

In February 1999 I visited Quanzhou in China's Fujian province, the site of medieval Zaitun, reached by the Jewish merchant of Ancona in 1271 and vividly described by him in my translation of *The City of Light* (London 1997, Shanghai 1999, Paris 2000, New York 2000). In January 1326, as I now know, Zaitun's third Catholic bishop, Andrea of Perugia, reported to his superiors in Italy that not a single Jew or Muslim in Zaitun had been converted to Christianity. The city is estimated to have had a population of some half-million in the 13th century, and was of an extraordinary cosmopolitanism. The merchant of Ancona, Jacob, reports that in 1271 there were 2,000 Jews there among the thousands and even tens of thousands of Muslims, Hindus—including Tamils—Armenians, Persians, Nestorian Christians, and others.

On my visit I was taken aside at a Buddhist temple in the town, and the carvings on the stone pillars of its portico were pointed out to me by a local historian. In his manuscript Jacob describes going to "the Temple of the Stone Phoenix" (held by early critics of *The City of Light* to have been an invention of mine). At head-height, on each of the stone columns, was carved a phoenix. It was stranger than fiction.

I am a non-sinologist, who does not speak a word of Chinese, who did not even know where Zaitun was, had never been to Quanzhou, did not know anybody who had, and had never read a word about it either in its past or in its present. But Western "experts," notwithstanding their professorial chairs and long lists of publications, have shown a lack of knowledge of medieval China greater even than that which they have attributed to me (or Jacob).

They have scoffed at many of the details of Jacob's description of the city. I therefore have been told, and now Hillel Halkin joins in ["The Strange Adventures of Jacob d'Ancona," April], that I have not translated a manuscript but written an intellectual autobiography, a picaresque novel, a political satire, or all three together. I am grateful for these compliments, for compliments they are.

But how did I (or is it Jacob?) get the disposition of districts, markets, and streets in medieval Zaitun right? Séance, crystal ball, second sight?

Then there are Jacob's reports of discussions at the home of a Confucian elder called Pitaco, and of public debates in Zaitun. Here Halkin has smelled an entire nest of rats. But the real experts in Quanzhou, masters of the local archives where no Western "expert" has ever ventured, have evinced no surprise at Jacob's account of these discussions and debates or of their subject-matter. A poem of which I have recently been informed could have been expressly written for me (or Jacob). By Dai Fugu, it tells of his visit to Zaitun in the 1230's. "I felt alone/ So Taisou [a local official] invited me to his home. / There, we talked about current events and the art of the poem. / One of the speakers was a foreigner who chatted about everything in a rambling way. / I had a hangover from it the next day, / Felt as if I had a weight on my back."

A foreigner at the house of a local official? Talking like Jacob of Ancona about current events in 13th-century Zaitun? Perish the thought! The poet seems to have been as wearied by the foreigner's conversation as Mr. Halkin claims to have been wearied by Jacob (or me).

The Chinese themselves—and many of my correspondents, including Hebraists and historians of the Silk Route—have begun to chal-

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lenge the judgments of Western medievalists and other "experts" about the supposedly inaccurate details in Jacob's account, or in my "novel." No carriages in Zaitun (Jonathan Spence of Yale)—wrong, with the Chinese themselves laughing aloud in my presence at the wrongness of it; no departure from Ancona in 1270 because it was "under blockade" (David Abulafia of Cambridge)—wrong; no honorific titles such as Jacob claims the local scholars possessed (Tim Barrett of the London School of Economics)—wrong; the word *mellah*, used by Jacob for the Jewish quarter of a city in the Persian gulf, not known until "1438" and therefore "anachronistic" (Bernard Wasserstein, formerly of Oxford)—wrong.

On the maritime route to China taken by Jacob, on the names for China and the Chinese used by Jacob, on his account of the Jews and their numbers in Zaitun, on the products in which Jacob says he trades, on his report of women wearing diaphanous silks in Zaitun—such silks have been found in a local tomb and were shown to me on my visit—and on one damn thing after another, Western "experts" have been shown to be wrong, wrong, wrong.

And now here comes Mr. Halkin, doing the same kind of thing. He tells the readers of COMMENTARY, in the manner of all the other experts—off the back of his head but as if he knew for certain—that the epithet "Unnameable" used of the deity by Jacob is anachronistic. He should read Leviticus. "If he [the Israelite] pronounces the name YHWH, he shall be put to death." Not new to a Jew of the 1270's, then, and in any case Rashi (1040-1105) uses the term. But this is how lack of scruple in criticism does its harms, and has done with *The City of Light* since Jonathan Spence started it, first in private and then in the *New York Times*.

I also notice that Mr. Halkin informs us all, with the same degree of accuracy, that Quanzhou is known in the West as "Canton." Now there's real knowledge of Chinese geography for you.

To repeat, I am neither a sinologist, nor a Hebraist, nor a medievalist, and therefore to refute straightaway the most authoritative-seeming but most wrong assertions has generally been impossible. But now that the Chinese have entered the fray, matters are changing.

Nevertheless, Mr. Halkin compares the work, as a "found book," with everything from Deuteronomy to Ossian. In so doing, he merely flatters me again. And while he does so, Henri Gambourg, a French scholar of the participation by Jews from biblical times onward in the trade with the Orient in silks, spices, and other things, tells me that the account by Jacob of Ancona "confirms [his] work of 20 years."

Whom, then, am I to believe? The Chinese historians of Quanzhou who have informed me that Jacob's transliterations of local place-names are recognizably from the highly-specialized medieval dialect of Zaitun, or a learned numbskull from London University who declares that Jacob could not have given earrings to his servants since "in the 13th century women did not wear earrings?" Should I credit Chinese scholars who have been working on *The City of Light* in the Vatican archives, and tell me that 13th- and 14th-century missionaries used, like Jacob, the words "Manci," "Mancini," and "Siniani" of China and the Chinese? Or should I have faith in Western sinologists who tell me, as usual, that these names are "wrong"? And could I have fooled the Chinese, while failing to fool Hillel Halkin?

Mr. Halkin has gone several steps further than the others. He tells us that, instead of going to the owner's house to work on the manuscript, I should have copied out its 280 pages, written on both sides of almost every page and perhaps 550 pages in all, with its cancellations, superscriptions, and illegibilities, and taken the whole thing home in order to translate it at my leisure; a double and impossible task, to which he could not have given even a moment's serious thought. Indeed, his is an even more fantastical proposition than he thinks mine is: that no permission was given me to photocopy it, to take samples from it, or to identify the owner. Mr. Halkin does not know the world of Italy's antiquities, that's for sure.

He also tells us, in a very complicated scenario of his own inventing, that I wrote my "novel" in the mid-1980's as some kind of warning against Soviet totalitarianism. I was then taken by surprise by the fall of Communism, and this somehow cooked my goose. (He almost has the imagination to have written *The City of Light* himself.) To continue, I was driven to pretend, he says, that the "novel" was really a lost manuscript in order to rescue my project.

Yet by 1984 I had already written my book *Against Socialist Illusion* (New York, 1985). A bit more Sherlock Holmes effort on Mr. Halkin's part and he could have discovered that, too. I also wrote objectively on the collapse of the Eastern European regimes for the *Independent*, the *Sunday Telegraph*, and the *Sunday Times* of London from 1987 to 1990.

No, I have a better idea. If Mr. Halkin wants motives for my "novel," an old Left recidivist (me) could have written the whole caboodle as a satirical political warning against the encroachments in China of Western market forces. If you look carefully, you will see that my "alter ego," Jacob, rails against such forces. He covertly warns the Chinese, as my subversive contribution to the new cold war between China and the West, that their society will be wrecked by them.

I could also have wanted to restore to the record, albeit by means of a fiction, part of the largely-canceled history of medieval Jewish mercantilism, and thus to have righted a serious wrong. I would also have been fulfilling my duty as a Jew, and as the author of a book called *The Principle of Duty* that Mr. Halkin himself generously praises.

But these suggestions bug even me. For they leave unanswered two big questions. How the devil did I get to know the medieval dialect of Zaitun? Alternatively, and more to the point, how did Jacob hear it and transliterate it without having been there?

DAVID SELBOURNE
Urbino, Italy

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TO THE EDITOR:

In discussing the subject of "found" books, Hillel Halkin makes three major errors in a paragraph devoted to the *Book of Mormon*. First, he states that Joseph Smith dug up the plates and that they were "never seen by anyone but himself." Every single copy of the *Book of Mormon* since its publication bears "The Testimony of the Three Witnesses" and "The Testimony of the Eight Witnesses." Eleven men in addition to Joseph Smith saw, handled, and inspected the plates. While some of these men later left the church, not one of them ever denied his testimony as it related to the plates.

Second, Mr. Halkin asserts that Smith hoped to "earn a hefty sum by publishing the *Book of Mormon*." Smith never intended to earn money from publishing the book but rather, by his own account, from selling the plates.

Third, Mr. Halkin states that Smith "only later founded a religion based on" the *Book of Mormon*, the implication being that since he could not make money from the book itself, he started a church. There is nothing in the historical record to support this notion. In any case, the claim of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is based not on the *Book of Mormon* but on revelation from God.

ROSS DAVID BARON
Claremont, California

HILLEL HALKIN writes:

David Selbourne has chosen to answer my article by responding, for the most part, to attacks on his book made by others while ignoring the points made by me. Although it is indeed impressive that many of the details in Jacob d'Ancona's account of 13th-century Quanzhou appear to be accurate, I never based my case against *The City of Light* (as others have done) by arguing that they were not. As I wrote in my article, such accuracy need only mean that Mr. Selbourne did his homework well. After all, for an English academic like himself to have learned a good deal about a medieval Chinese city is hardly an impossible task.

Let us imagine the opposite. Suppose a Chinese academic who knew no English and had never been to England wished to write a factually accurate historical novel about 13th-century London. Could he do this? Of course he could. He would simply need a competent English research assistant who could be trusted not to spill the beans when this novel was presented as a medieval manuscript written by a Chinese traveler to the West. Mr. Selbourne boasts that many of Jacob d'Ancona's statements about medieval Quanzhou, while scoffed at by Western scholars, are known to be true in China. What is known to be true in China could fairly easily have be-

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come known to Mr. Selbourne, too.

Mr. Selbourne thinks it is too much of me to expect him to have copied "550 pages" of a medieval Italian manuscript in its owner's house. While I agree that this is a lot of work, I can only assure him once again that translating the same number of pages is even more work. Nor do I understand what "not knowing the world of Italian antiquities"—an ignorance I cheerfully admit—has to do with my asking how a mere photocopy of a manuscript could have given away the identity of its owner. Similarly, I fail to comprehend Mr. Selbourne's explanation of Jacob d'Ancona's references to God as "the Unnameable One"—a phrase, I repeat, that is not to be found in Hebrew and rabbinic discourse, the writings of Rashi included. Among the many rabbinic euphemisms used for God one frequently finds "The Name," but never "The Unnameable One."

Having said all this, I might add that I am by no means 100-percent convinced that Jacob d'Ancona's medieval travel journal is a forgery. Five percent of me is so enchanted by the idea of Jacob's voyage, and so struck by Mr. Selbourne's tenacity in defending it, that it is tempted to believe him. But it will remain no more than that until Mr. Selbourne produces some tangible proof that a manuscript written by Jacob really exists.

The historical record on Joseph Smith and the *Book of Mormon* is clear. Of the eleven witnesses who claimed to have seen Smith's "golden plates," three, among them Smith's disciple David Whitmer, said they were shown them in a vision by an angel; the other eight were five members of Whitmer's family and Joseph Smith's father and two brothers. The *Book of Mormon* itself was first printed in 1830 in 5,000 copies—a large edition for those days—and put on sale in bookstores; had it sold well, Smith certainly would have made a hefty sum. But I did not mean to imply, as Ross Baron David understood, that Smith founded the Mormon religion because the book sold poorly.

Oil & Gas

TO THE EDITOR:

There is almost nothing in Irwin M. Stelzer's lucid discussion of "What to Do about the Energy Crunch" [March] with which I disagree, but a few comments do come to mind.

Mr. Stelzer writes that electricity shortages in California and the revival of OPEC have "reminded Americans that in the long run there can be no benign neglect of energy policy." Aside from the clever turn of phrase, I am at a loss to know what Mr. Stelzer is aiming at with this remark.

His main point, which I heartily endorse, is that decisions about investment in and the allocation of energy resources are almost always better left to automatic market forces than to government intervention. But why should this insight, which is the beginning and end (and almost everything in between) of wisdom about energy policy, be described *as* an energy policy? My point, which I admit is almost purely rhetorical, would not be worth making if it were not for the unfortunate fact that since the "energy crisis" of the 1970's, the term "energy policy" has been a code word for precisely the sort of misguided government sabotage of market mechanisms that Mr. Stelzer properly deplores and ridicules. After all, does the country have or need a food policy, a clothing policy, or a shelter policy? Why should we have an "energy policy"?

To reverse field somewhat, I would also observe that, in discussing electricity shortages, Mr. Stelzer, while noting the lunacy of regulatory ceilings on the retail price of electricity, overlooks a real problem in any attempt to impose market discipline on electricity markets, which is that local electricity distribution is a natural monopoly. Given his distinguished background as an antitrust economist, it is disappointing that Mr. Stelzer does not mention the problem of allowing greater freedom in pricing electricity while also limiting the monopoly power of local utilities.

Finally, in discussing U.S. policy toward OPEC, Mr. Stelzer suggests that diplomatic pressure might induce certain of its members like Kuwait or fellow travelers like Mexico to take actions to restrain oil-price increases. I have no definite opinion, but am inclined to be skeptical about the efficacy of such diplomacy. One wishes Mr. Stelzer had also discussed strictly economic alternatives that would effectively deploy the not inconsiderable potential of U.S. monopoly power in the world oil market, such as imposing oil-import quotas that would be auctioned off to exporters (thus reclaiming for the U.S. Treasury part of the monopoly premium on imported oil).

DAVID GLASNER
Silver Spring, Maryland

TO THE EDITOR:

As an exploration geophysicist who has been out of work for two years due to the "slowdown" in the oil business, I was gladdened by Irwin M. Stelzer's analysis of the energy crunch, which I believe is entirely accurate.

One issue Mr. Stelzer's article seems not to address is this: why did American and other international oil companies not react to the heightened oil prices? Surely this stimulus should have spurred increased exploration and development in non-OPEC countries. The figures I have seen suggest that only now, in 2001, will companies increase their spending on exploration by 20 percent, in response to an oil-price increase of more than 100 percent since 1999.

May I suggest that United Nations pronouncements seeking to limit industrial development in forest areas and to curb greenhouse-gas emissions have convinced many governments to slow oil exploration? Surely this is one area where the U.S. must persuade other governments—in underdeveloped countries as well as developed ones—that such ridiculous concepts, foreign to free-market ideas and scientific rigor, must not be allowed to impede the international search for oil and gas.

WILLIAM KELLY
Scotland, United Kingdom

TO THE EDITOR:

I would like to respond to Irwin M. Stelzer's statement, in discussing natur-

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"Peace in the Middle East (I)"

Can it be achieved under the present circumstances?

After over fifty years of the bizarre notion of not recognizing the "existence" of the State of Israel, after eight years of the Oslo "peace process", and after being offered unbelievably generous conditions to bring an end to the long and bloody conflict, the Palestinians have rejected those terms and have instead chosen to continue on their path of violence. They have erupted in the bloody Al-Aksa Intifada, which so far has caused hundreds of dead and thousands of injured. The question can be raised whether peace with the Palestinians is possible at all.

What are the facts?

The Root of the Middle East Conflict. Many observers of the Middle East believe that the root of the area's conflict lies in the dispute between the Palestinians and the Israeli Jews -- that peace could come to the area if that conflict could be resolved. And the way it should be resolved, these observers believe, is by Israel's yielding its heartland, Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"), and the Gaza Strip for the creation of a Palestinian state and by returning the Golan Heights to Syria. But after the late Hafez Assad's brusque refusal to accept the return of the Golan (because it would not include the shores of the Sea of Galilee), and after Arafat's contemptuous refusal of Barak's generous offer, it is clear that the Arabs do not want peace -- they want confrontation and the destruction of Israel.

People also overlook that the conflict between Palestinian Arabs and Jews long predates Israel's control over the administered territories, that Arab-Arab wars are endemic in the area, and that Israel would be defenseless and at the mercy of its implacable enemies if it were to yield control of these strategic territories without a full peace -- not just with the Palestinians, but with *all* the Arabs.

The Menace of Islamic Fundamentalism. The clamor for yielding strategic territories to the Arabs is the first step in the immutable Arab attempt to liquidate Israel altogether. Because, certainly, Israel, with its fewer than 6 million inhabitants, compared to almost 300 million Arabs, and with its less than 10,000 square miles, compared to almost 5 million square miles of the Arab countries, cannot possibly be a threat to peace or a menace to the Arabs. And reducing the territory of Israel from 10,000 square miles to 7,000 square miles would not seem likely to bring peace one step closer. The main reason that real peace is so difficult to attain is the political and cultural context of the Middle East, which is dominated by the menace of Islamic fundamentalism. By the tenets of this fundamentalism, Israel's size is not of importance; it is the very existence of Israel that, to fundamentalist believers, is an intolerable offense, an unacceptable insult to Islam. The fundamentalist Moslems -- Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and all the others -- do not aim at peace with Israel or the recovery of some territory. Their publicly declared aim is the destruction of the Jewish State. On more than one occasion, the Islamic Jihad has stated: "[This is] definite and irrevocable . . . We will be satisfied with nothing but the destruction of Israel."

Real Peace Must Be Global. The current upheavals in Israel, in its administered territories, and in the areas that Israel has transferred to the Palestinian Authority, may give the impression that peace would come to the region if Israel would come to terms with the aspirations of the Palestinians. But that is impossible, because the destruction of Israel is the stated purpose of the Palestinians, as embedded in their never-revoked Covenant. But even if it were achievable, peace would not come about, because such a peace would be a non-global one. The most fervent enemies of Israel -- Iran, Iraq, and including even Egypt (with which Israel is technically at peace) -- have as their principal foreign policy goal the destruction of Israel, a goal that would not be altered even if Israel acceded to every wish of the Palestinians. Those Arab statesmen who have tried to come to terms with the Jewish State have invariably found a terrible end. King Abdullah of Transjordan was assassinated by the rejectionists, so was President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, and so was President Bashir Gemayel of Lebanon, all of whom envisioned peaceful cooperation and co-existence with Israel. Every Arab leader knows that any overt declaration of wishing to make real peace and to co-exist and to cooperate with Israel is a suicidal death sentence.

> **"Real peace . . . can only happen through a complete change of mentality, policies, and historical ambitions in the Arab-Iranian block."**

We all want peace, of course, especially the Israelis, who have been almost constantly embattled since the foundation of their state. But because of Arab-Islamic fundamentalism that cannot tolerate a Jewish presence on any part of "Arab territory", and because any peace arrived at would be non-global, such real peace would seem difficult to attain at this time. One hopes that real peace -- the Arabs' acceptance of a Jewish State and peaceful co-existence and cooperation with it -- will come eventually. But it can only happen through a complete change of mentality, policies, and historical ambitions in the Arab-Iranian block, abandonment of fanatic fundamentalism, and change to genuine democracy. And that may well take a very long time. In the meantime, Israel must keep up its guard and cannot afford to yield strategic territory, without which it would be vulnerable.

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al gas, that "the increase in demand has also come at a time when exploring for new gas supplies has itself been inhibited in part by restrictions on drilling offshore and in the Arctic."

The Fuel Use Act of 1978 was still influencing the supply/demand system when this new and heightened demand arrived. A significant part of the supply/demand imbalance was thus caused by the market's continued efforts to sort out the severe distortions created by the act's phased deregulation of the supply side, and the concurrent prohibition of natural-gas use in new power plants and large industrial plants. This created the long-term "bubble" that has kept wellhead prices generally in the $1.00-to-$2.00 range. These are obviously not the circumstances within which to build a robust and efficient business, and the result has been twenty years of hard times for the U.S. natural-gas industry.

Today, although we still have a vast resource base, we have a relatively weak industry with critical problems in deliverability, a severe lack of equipment, and, even more important, a dire shortage of people capable of efficiently operating that equipment. Because of the length of time in natural-energy cycles, the full effects of the 1978 legislation and prior price regulation may not be eliminated from the system for another five to ten years, and then only if the politicians keep their noses out of the marketplace.

ROBERT A. HEFNER III
The GHK Company
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

TO THE EDITOR:

I differ with Irwin M. Stelzer about not interfering with markets when it comes to our nation's most pressing vulnerability, which is dependence on foreign sources for energy. While Mr. Stelzer claims that "few congressmen would vote for OPEC's interests over those of American consumers," it is a fair assumption that more than a few congressmen would vote for GM, Ford, Exxon/Mobil and Chevron/Texaco's interests over those of the American consumer.

The aim of the oil and auto industry is to maintain the status quo of just about a 100-percent dependence on oil-based transportation. The one-time participation of GM and Standard Oil in the forced extinction of 100 trolley lines in 45 American cities attests to this, as does the more recent battle against the advent of electric vehicles. But oil is a finite resource, and depletion can be assured within our children's lifetime.

Mr. Stelzer is correct in stating that "for a way out of our predicament we will have to look not to OPEC, but to ourselves." However, his suggestion to increase domestic supplies will have no short-term impact (because of the time it takes to bring the first barrel to market) and only a minimal long-term impact because of the limited additional reserves available (stated Arctic reserves are about 3.5 billion barrels plus possibly another billion or two from offshore). Our total domestic reserves now stand at under 30 billion barrels. All this compares with the 6.5 billion barrels we consume annually, of which 3.5 billion are imported. Meanwhile, on the demand side, it is unlikely that any politician interested in getting re-elected would vote for significantly higher gasoline taxes as suggested by Mr. Stelzer.

Alternatives to oil are thus the only real long-term hope. Today we can satisfy a significant portion of our ground-transportation needs by replacing conventional internal-combustion-engine vehicles (ICEV's) with battery-powered electric vehicles (EV's). Less than 3 percent of the fuel used in electric-power plants is oil, with the majority of electric power being generated by coal-based plants, and the U.S. is the Saudi Arabia of coal.

The performance needs of short-range vehicles, including U.S. Postal Service vehicles, intracity transit buses, and second cars for commuting to and from work and for shopping, can be met by EV's using nickel-metal-hydride batteries. With a government subsidy (possibly derived from selling some of the currently useless oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve), we could build an infrastructure of rapid-charging stations that in 15 minutes would provide additional capacity and range.

The cost of EV's, when mass produced, should be no more than that of conventional vehicles, and operating and maintenance costs will be lower. In a reasonable number of years, many of the nation's gas-guzzling vehicles could be replaced, and the need for imports would soon disappear, as would much of our trade deficit. Even taking into account associated power-plant emissions, there would be significant reduction of pollution. And finally, we would no longer be dependent on the vagaries of Arab despots for our oil needs.

MORRIS ALTSCHULER
Rockville, Maryland

IRWIN M. STELZER writes:

Having been accused by David Glasner of inadequate devotion to free markets in energy and by Morris Altschuler of a refusal to interfere with those very same markets, I can only apologize for any lack of clarity that misled readers.

Mr. Glasner is quite right to warn that the phrase "energy policy" has been used by politicians eager to intervene in energy markets, with disastrous results. The government has in the past created crises by rationing gasoline, trying to dictate which fuels should be used, and massively subsidizing uneconomic and wasteful projects to enhance supply and diminish demand. President Nixon promised us "energy independence" and President Carter suggested that if we donned sweaters and hair shirts, and waged the "moral equivalent of war" (unfortunate acronym: MEOW), all would be well. Both caused more problems than they solved.

Which is why I tried to explain that by an "energy policy" I mean something quite different from market intervention. Rather, I have in mind a series of actions to remove impediments to the functioning of free markets: OPEC's restrictions on supply; environmental regulations that cannot be justified on a cost/benefit basis; the failure to impose on energy users the full social costs of their decisions to consume rather than conserve.

Such policies are too passive to satisfy Mr. Altschuler, who sees in our future technologies that are now being

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denied us on account of successful lobbying by the oil and auto industries. I have no doubt that these industries are pursuing their interests vigorously, and that, like all others—manufacturers of everything from windmills to allegedly emission-free vehicles—they will attempt to wring from governments such special advantages as they can. Indeed, in California, manufacturers of electric vehicles have persuaded regulators to mandate that a certain percentage of all cars be battery-powered: so much for the power of the oil lobby, let alone the fact that the state seems more than a bit short of electricity.

Mr. Altschuler also worries that the world is running out of oil. This fear, repeated regularly ever since oil first became a major energy source in America, flies in the face of the huge pools of untapped reserves awaiting the drill bit around the world. Incidentally, the data do show that higher oil prices are galvanizing explorers to step up drilling for oil and gas—not as quickly as William Kelly would like, but then few markets have instantaneous supply-side responses to rising prices. Markets work slowly at times, but more quickly and accurately than the government fiat that is the alternative to letting prices decide how much of our resources should be allocated to an industry.

Another concern voiced by David Glasner is that I have not recognized that the wires business—distribution of electricity—remains a natural monopoly. Although we should be more nervous than we once were about so designating any industry—only a few years ago, we thought electricity generation was likewise a natural monopoly—I agree with him, which is why I have suggested that the monopoly elements of any business (telephones as well as electricity and gas) be separated from the competitive elements, and regulated to hold returns more or less to the cost of capital.

I turn finally to Robert Hefner III, an old friend and sparring partner from the days when I sought regulatory support for natural gas that could be produced only at many multiples of free-market prices. I quite agree with him that the Fuel Use Act, the government's mad attempt to decide which fuels should be used for what purposes, has had the long-term negative effects one can expect of such folly. And I share his hope that politicians will "keep their noses out of the marketplace." But California's experience suggests this is a forlorn hope. Energy just seems too tempting a target for intervention by politicians, often aided and abetted by private-sector players in those industries who find the results of free-market competition unpleasant. It is safe to predict that before very long we shall see more of the sorts of "energy policies" that Mr. Glasner rightly fears.

"Traffic"

TO THE EDITOR:

Gary Rosen's review of *Traffic* surprised me, mostly because I found myself in basic agreement with his analysis of the movie—as a movie ["*Traffic* and the War on Drugs," April]. Where his review falls short, I believe, is in his commentary on the real-world drug policies and problems that are dramatized in *Traffic*. He makes three mistakes.

The first is his numerous references to a "drug-legalization movement." Most Americans understand the phrase "drug legalization" to mean making not just marijuana but heroin, cocaine, PCP, and all other drugs legally available in more or less the same way as alcohol, tobacco, or even coffee. By that definition, it is hard to discern any real movement for drug legalization. What does exist is

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a growing movement for drug-policy reform, composed of varying groups opposed to the excesses of the war on drugs. Most agree that marijuana prohibition is a costly failure that needs to end, but with respect to drugs like heroin and cocaine, the dominant reform view favors "harm reduction," which might best be defined as the intersection of public health and human rights with respect to drug use and abuse.

I am not sure why Mr. Rosen makes this mistake. Perhaps it is because the most prominent conservative supporters of drug-policy reform—men such as Milton Friedman, William F. Buckley, Jr., and Governor Gary Johnson of New Mexico—do advocate drug legalization. But if one chooses to "follow the money" donated to this cause by George Soros (the primary supporter of my organization) and others, or to focus on what leading reformers say and do day to day, then the expression "drug-legalization movement" is an unfortunate and misleading misnomer.

Mr. Rosen's second mistake is to assume that any relaxation of prohibitionist controls will result in more drug abuse. Here the evidence is against him. According to a recent survey by the World Health Organization, the incidence of marijuana use in much of Europe pales in comparison to that of the United States, notwithstanding the fact that Europe has increasingly followed the Dutch lead on decriminalization while U.S. policies have become ever more repressive. The Dutch claim that they have succeeded in making cannabis "boring." In the U.S., meanwhile, high school students say that marijuana is easier to obtain than alcohol.

Mr. Rosen's third mistake is to point to the apparent drop in the number of people who admit to having used marijuana or cocaine as significant evidence that U.S. drug policies have been successful. This drop occurred mostly during the 1980's. But in 1980 no one had ever heard of the cheap, smokable form of cocaine called crack or of drug-related HIV infection. By the 1990's, both had reached epidemic proportions in American cities. Is this success?

Or consider that in 1980, the federal budget for drug control was about $1 billion, and state and local budgets perhaps two or three times that. Now the federal drug-control budget has ballooned to roughly $20 billion, two-thirds of it for law enforcement, and state and local governments spend even more. On any day in 1980, approximately 50,000 people were behind bars for violating drug laws. Now the number is approaching 500,000—more people than all of Europe, despite its greater population, incarcerates for everything. Is this success?

Government expenditures and policies on drug control need to be assessed according to a real bottom line. The current strategy—with its failure to distinguish between drug use and drug abuse, and its indifference to the mounting costs and negative consequences of the policies themselves—needs to be held accountable. If conservatives will not do it, someone needs to.

ETHAN NADELMANN
Executive Director
The Lindesmith Center-Drug Policy Foundation
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

My thanks to Gary Rosen for giving a boost to the idea of drug testing and sanctions for offenders on probation and parole—and for crediting the idea to me, as if I were its originator rather than its promoter. We agree about the movie *Traffic*: as an essay on drug policy, the film is badly confused.

But Mr. Rosen's review embraces the one error about drugs the film avoids: that we face a stark choice between something called "the war on drugs" and something called "drug legalization." That is a comfortable myth for both the legalizers and the warriors, but it is manifestly false. There are other options. It is not hard to make a list of policy reforms that, without changing the legal status of any drug, would greatly reduce the total damage done to drug users and others by drug abuse, drug dealing, and drug-control efforts.

In addition to "coerced abstinence" as part of probation and parole, the list would include: a smarter, smaller law-enforcement effort, aimed mainly at open-air drug markets; much more selectivity in imprisonment for drug dealing, focusing on dealers who use violence or employ juveniles; less hysteria, and more respect for the facts, in drug-prevention messages distributed via the mass media, the classroom, and official pronouncements; better, and more easily available, drug treatment; more efforts to promote "natural" or "spontaneous" desistance among people with drug-abuse disorders, including a publicity campaign like the one that did so much to increase the "quit rate" among smokers; and, finally, serious attention to the alcohol problem.

Indeed, alcohol creates more havoc—more addiction, more disease, more fetal damage, more family breakup, more accidents, and more crime—than all the illicit drugs combined. Yet practical policies to reduce that damage cannot even be discussed. Why, for example, do we forbid convicted drunken drivers to drive, but allow them to continue to drink? If a bartender may not serve a law-abiding twenty-year-old, how about a twenty-five-year-old drunken wife-beater? The average drink imposes costs on third parties of about a dollar; is a dime really an adequate level of taxation on it? And when are we going to see some anti-drunkenness ads on television?

Mr. Rosen's essay badly understates the damage done by a hypertrophied drug-enforcement campaign and overstates the magnitude of recent moves toward moderation in drug control. It also gives hawkish policies too much credit for hopeful trends in some drug-related statistics. To the drug-war hawks, improved numbers always show that tough policies are working, while bad trends—such as increases in teenage marijuana use in the early 1990's and in heroin and methamphetamine use more recently—simply prove that we are not being tough enough.

Retiring the "drug war" metaphor, as Gary Rosen suggests, would represent progress. But metaphors are easier to change than policies, and policies are easier to change than patterns of thought. As long as we think of the problem in

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terms of decent, ordinary folk versus "the drug culture," we will continue to incur, and inflict, needless suffering.

MARK A.R. KLEIMAN
School of Public Policy & Social Research
UCLA
Los Angeles, California

TO THE EDITOR:

I got the same message from *Traffic* as Gary Rosen did: that it would be better to legalize drugs than to prohibit them. But unlike Mr. Rosen, I do not believe that "our decades-long campaign against illegal drug use has been less than a triumph." I believe it has been a disaster.

By turning popular drugs into contraband, prohibition causes tremendous inflation in their price. Drugs that cost only pennies to grow and process sell for hundreds of dollars on the street, amounting to countless billions of dollars each year. In a rational society, such a gigantic industry would be regulated. But the intense competition of the drug market is regulated only by violence. Rival dealers do not go to court with their disputes—they shoot it out in the streets, killing hundreds of people each year in drive-by shootings. The drug market now holds entire urban neighborhoods hostage.

Of course, ending the prohibition of drugs would not be a panacea. But imagine the benefits of curbing the black market. Huge profits would come to an end, kids would not be drawn to dealing, addicts would not be pushed to steal, and the sea of violence and crime would subside. The government could divert billions, now wasted on interdiction, to education and treatment.

SAMUEL RABINOVE
White Plains, New York

TO THE EDITOR:

Gary Rosen's commentary on *Traffic* was measured, and concluded with a positive call to drop the term "war on drugs" and all it implies from the nation's efforts to address its very real drug problem.

What Mr. Rosen totally fails to see is the causal connection between the war on drugs and the increasing dominance in American society of police, prosecutors, and prisons. Police departments all over the country have come under ever more criticism for treating anyone even associated with drugs as a pariah effectively beyond the pale of constitutional rights. Prosecutors, it has been shown, are more and more likely to violate ethical and legal standards by bringing maliciously selective prosecutions, using jailhouse snitches, and withholding exonerating evidence. And, thanks to the war on drugs, prisons have become a growth industry in America, looking like a Gulag if you are poor and black. Add all this up and the result is a national disaster and a burgeoning police state.

A better way lies in the movement known as "harm reduction." Under such a regime, a person who uses drugs yet manages to lead a responsible life—that is, does not become a burden on the rest of society—would not be a societal concern. Legal sanctions would apply only when a drug user engages in bad behavior, such as assault, robbery, driving while intoxicated, or being a public nuisance.

None of this will work, of course, unless there are serious programs available for people to get effective drug rehabilitation. And, yes, given the presence of bad behavior, attendance in

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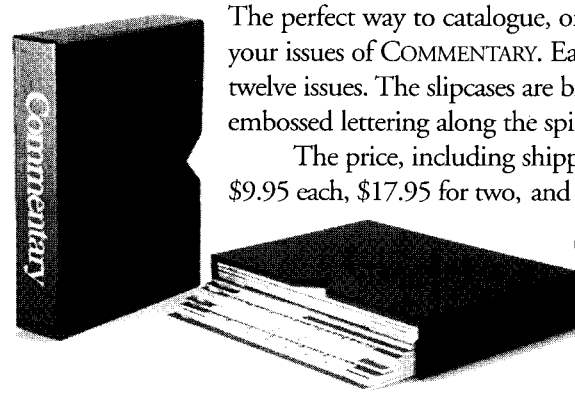

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such programs can and should be mandatory. If offenders refuse help, then lock them up.

Less moralizing and more pragmatism would go a long way toward solving the drug problem. Despite its limitations and Hollywood shortcomings, *Traffic* is an excellent catalyst to begin a real discussion.

JOHN GRANT
Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR:

I understand Gary Rosen's worry about the legalizing of drugs. But it is also important to consider the well-being of the foreign countries where our drug habits wreak havoc. In Colombia, for example, the multimillion-dollar drug cartels can easily finance both left-wing guerillas and right-wing death squads to protect their plantations and laboratories, thus destabilizing that whole nation. No amount of U.S. military assistance will alter this situation.

We have to do away with the financial base of these criminals. The only way to do this is to legalize, under strict government control, the import and manufacture of narcotics, not only in the U.S. but wherever drug abuse is rampant.

RALF THILEN
Parkland, Florida

TO THE EDITOR:

The defensive tone of Gary Rosen's review puzzled me. *Traffic* was far inferior to the British television series on which it was based. The original *Traffik* (as it was called) was far more clear-eyed about drugs, their sources (in Southern Asia rather than Mexico), the human scum who trade in them, and their corrupting effects on ordinary people in the Third World. Moreover, it blew apart the sort of sophistry (e.g., that alcohol and cigarettes are the same as crack cocaine) that *Traffic*'s director, Steven Soderbergh, piles into his somewhat pathetic pro-drugs homily.

There are good moral reasons for condemning the drug trade, aside from the objective physical and social damage it causes. The vicious exploitation of human weakness for money has always been outside the pale of decent society. To say it is now okay because these criminals—and the mortal frailty they exploit—cannot be wiped out is an argument that applies just as neatly to murder or any other crime.

HERB GREER
Manchester, England

GARY ROSEN writes:

Ethan Nadelmann is the very capable, if exasperatingly disingenuous, point man for a movement that dare not declare its true aims. How did I make the "mistake" of associating him and his billionaire patron, George Soros, with so extremist a goal as drug legalization? Well, by casting my eyes over some of Mr. Nadelmann's statements on the subject, like "The Case for Legalization" (*The Public Interest*), "How to

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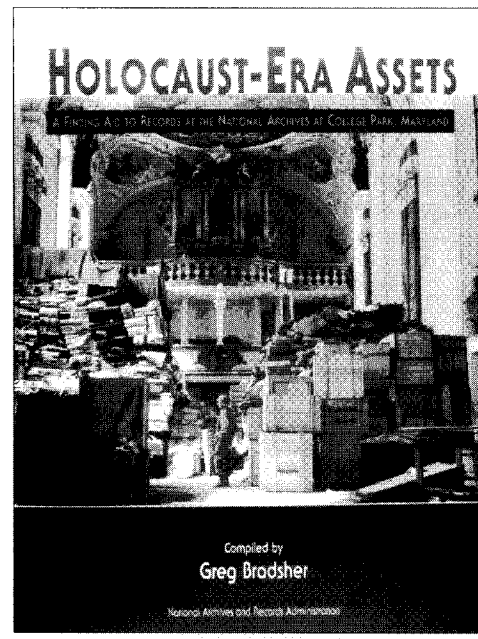

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Legalize" (an interview with *Mother Jones*), "Thinking Seriously about Alternatives to Drug Prohibition" (*Daedalus*), and "Should We Legalize Drugs? History Answers Yes" (*American Heritage*).

Of course, all of these articles date from the late 1980's and early 1990's; by 1995, when Mr. Nadelmann gave an interview to *High Times*, he had reconsidered his choice of words. As he told the marijuana-advocacy magazine, "I don't talk about legalization per se that much anymore. That term is so loaded."

Indeed, it is—which is why Mr. Nadelmann now speaks with such practiced evasiveness. I have no reason to doubt that he is against legalization when it is defined, as he insists on defining it, as making "not just marijuana but heroin, cocaine, PCP, and all other drugs legally available in more or less the same way as alcohol, tobacco, or even coffee." But in reality the term means nothing more than ending or significantly reducing the legal sanctions that apply to drugs—a goal that Mr. Nadelmann, despite his use of soothing euphemisms like drug-policy "reform" and "harm reduction," still very much supports. As he told the *Wall Street Journal* this past May, "the core vision" of his work for George Soros "is that people shouldn't be punished for what they put in their bodies, absent harm to others." Does he really believe that "most Americans" would not consider this an endorsement of drug legalization?

Truth in labeling is important. Even more important are the likely consequences of removing the legal prohibitions—and with them, ultimately, the social taboos—that currently apply to drug use. Mr. Nadelmann assures us that there is no reason to worry, since the Dutch, by decriminalizing marijuana use, have made it "boring." Perhaps, but according to the most authoritative study on the subject (published in *Science*), they have also made it considerably more common: among eighteen-year-olds in the Netherlands, those who admitted to using the drug rose from 15 percent in 1984 to 44 percent in 1996.

Is this—to borrow Mr. Nadelmann's refrain—success? Is this the example we wish to emulate? Marijuana may be easier to obtain than alcohol for some American high-school students, as he claims, but the real question is how many of them *wish* to obtain it. The number would surely rise dramatically if the use of marijuana were transformed from an illegal activity into a mere privilege reserved for adults.

Mr. Nadelmann decries the expense of our current drug-control regime and the number of Americans it has sent to prison. Samuel Rabinove, John Grant, and Ralf Thilen—who are more candid than Mr. Nadelmann in their advocacy of legalization—point to other costs: violence in our cities, malfeasance by overzealous police and prosecutors, devastating warfare in South America. There is an element of truth in these claims, as I acknowledged in my article, but also the usual quotient of hyperbole and hysteria. (No, Mr. Grant, we do not live in a "burgeoning police state"—nor, I might add, is it the case, as Mr. Nadelmann has outrageously suggested to interviewers, that drug-users are now "persecuted" and "demonized" much as Jews have been in the past.)

Still, any serious effort at reform must begin by recognizing that, in most respects, our drug-control policies have performed pretty well. The incidence of drug-related crime and violence has dropped considerably over the last decade, and the overall trend in drug use—despite a recent upward spurt and the arrival on the scene of various new drugs—is encouraging. Marijuana and cocaine consumption remain low as compared with the late 1970's and early 1980's, and the level of heroin use has been stable. As a percentage of the population, half as many Americans now use an illicit drug as did so fifteen or twenty years ago. With other negative social indicators so sharply on the rise over the same period, this must be considered progress.

The basic premise of existing policy—the premise that Ethan Nadelmann and his allies find so objectionable—is that drug use should be illegal. Mark A.R. Kleiman and I share this premise; none of his recommended reforms, as he emphasizes, would involve "changing the legal status of any drug." Indeed, Mr. Kleiman's interesting and (for the most part) worthwhile suggestions assume that we will continue to impose sanctions on drug users and dealers and to bring public opinion forcefully to bear in discouraging drug consumption. It is thus clear to me why Mr. Kleiman considers *Traffic* "badly confused" as "an essay on drug policy," but less clear why he is so indignant about my similar reaction to it, and insists on classifying me as an unthinking drug "warrior" or "hawk."

Finally, Herb Greer wonders why I adopted a "defensive tone" in my review of *Traffic*. He is mistaken. My tone was not defensive but admiring—*Traffic* is a powerful, if ultimately wrong-headed, piece of film-making, and Steven Soderbergh richly deserved his Academy Award for directing it.

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Commentary
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Shopping with Saddam Hussein

Gary Milhollin & Kelly Motz

WHETHER OR not the world is ready, Saddam Hussein is back. With oil income now reaching the levels he enjoyed before the Gulf war, Iraq's president is beginning to buy his way out of the "box" in which former Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright famously declared we had confined him.

What Saddam chooses to spend his money on is of cardinal importance. During the decade before the 1991 Gulf war, when he could buy what he wanted, his weapons scientists imported factories to make poison gas, strains of microbes for germ-warfare agents, missiles that during the Gulf war would kill U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia, and equipment that, had the war not intervened, would long since have produced an atomic bomb.

But the Gulf war did intervene, and as a consequence, after its troops were routed in Operation Desert Storm, Iraq pledged to disarm. To verify that it had done so, a UN inspection regime was put into place, coupled with a ban on international trade with Baghdad that had been imposed in 1990. The inspectors were in for a big surprise. They uncovered a complex of secret sites in which virtually every kind of weaponry of mass destruction was being fabricated. Iraq had purchased giant magnets and centrifuges for enriching uranium, had imported German components to enhance the range of Scud missiles purchased from the Soviet Union, had bought plants for producing chemical and biological agents, and had actually loaded those agents into warheads. (The record of these purchases can be found in our online publication, IraqWatch.org.)

It was these discoveries, and the resulting friction with Saddam's regime, that led in 1998 to the UN inspectors being forced out. The sanctions on international trade, however, remained in place, though increasingly they had come to resemble what President Bush last January characterized as so much "Swiss cheese." Now a joint British-American proposal has been put forward that would replace the current broad-based sanctions with prohibitions only on the sale of arms and some civilian "dual-use" items. The new arrangement would also continue the current "oil-for-food" system, under which Iraq can sell as much oil as it wants but is supposed to deposit the revenue in a UN-supervised escrow account and use it only to buy civilian goods that the UN has specifically approved.

The new proposal—whether adopted by the UN or not—has little hope of stopping the Iraqis from sneaking in what they need to rebuild their weapons sites and sneaking out the oil to pay for it. For the truth is that even when the UN inspection regime was in place, the Iraqis had already figured out how to do just that.

HERE IS how the system works. Suppose an Iraqi site needs a new computer-controlled machine tool, one especially capable of making the high-precision parts needed for long-range missiles

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or nuclear weapons. Since such a purchase would be vetoed at the United Nations, the order goes instead to a middleman in Jordan. The middleman contacts the manufacturer, who cannot export to Iraq without the approval of the UN but is perfectly free to export to Jordan, unhampered by any embargo. The machine goes to the free-trade port of Aqaba, where the middleman—listed falsely as the final user—loads it on a truck and illegally sends it to Iraq.

The international community's export-control system operates on the assumption that, in such cases, at least some steps will be taken to stop goods at the border, or, failing that, to punish malefactors later. But neither is happening. The only trucks that stop at the border between Jordan and Iraq are the ones carrying goods bought under oil-for-food contracts that have been authorized by the UN. These come to rest inside Iraq itself so that UN monitors can check the paperwork, thus enabling the seller to get his money. Other trucks, carrying contraband cargo, simply cross the border unchecked.

And how does the contraband cargo get paid for? According to the latest estimates, Jordan imports, at discount prices, about $300 million worth of Iraqi oil per year *outside* the UN oil-for-food program. (Jordan argues that it has no other source of affordable oil, so the UN and the United States have chosen to ignore this continuing breach in the embargo.) To get reimbursed for his hot cargo, the smuggler or his agent presents an invoice to the commercial attaché at Iraq's embassy in Jordan, who pays him out of the proceeds of the sale of Iraq's oil shipments. In effect, cut-rate oil is being bartered for whatever Iraq wants to buy.

There is, of course, a reason why Jordan does not police its borders or track what goes through its free-trade zones. If machine tools stopped coming out of Jordan, discounted oil would stop coming in. Jordanian middlemen, officials, and others who live off the discount would be hit hard. Besides, in addition to the $300 million in unregulated oil, Iraq directs oil-for-food contracts through Jordan. The money gives Baghdad enormous leverage.

A similar situation is developing in Syria. Last November, oil began to flow through a newly repaired Iraq/Syria pipeline, all of it outside UN control, at a value estimated at $1 billion a year. Although Secretary of State Colin Powell recently announced a Syrian pledge to bring this revenue under UN jurisdiction, Syria has taken no discernible action. As billions of dollars in unregulated cash pile up in Damascus, smuggling can be expected to explode. And Lebanon, which this past April was offered a deal similar to Jordan's, appears to be next.

Since Saddam could sell his oil at a much higher price by operating through the UN, he is obviously expecting something in return from the slush funds he has been creating around his borders. What is he getting, and from whom?

BEFORE BEING forced out in 1998, the UN inspectors compiled a series of confidential reports detailing what they knew about Iraq's foreign suppliers. We have been able to see these reports, which have never been published. What they recount is an ongoing effort to build weapons of mass destruction. Throughout the 90's, in violation of the UN embargo and in the teeth of the inspection regime, the Iraqis were continuing to "import goods . . . from at least . . . twenty different countries." On Iraq's shopping list were "turnkey facilities, full-sized production lines, industrial know-how, high-tech spare parts, and raw materials." The success of this import program depended on "a disturbing proclivity on the part of several countries and companies to supply Iraq with missile technology and assistance, despite the sanctions maintained by the United Nations."

The core of Iraq's present supply network dates from the early 1990's. As the result of a decision to concentrate its shopping expeditions in Eastern Europe, Iraqi delegations fanned out to Belarus, Ukraine, Romania, and Russia, waving petrodollars in front of these countries' once proud but now starving missile and military plants. They returned with suitcases full of illicit contracts for virtually every kind of equipment a missile-maker might need.

The experience in Belarus was typical. In July 1995, a high-level Iraqi delegation arrived in Minsk. It came from the Badr State Establishment, which had achieved renown before and during the Gulf war. Badr's machine tools had turned out components for the high-speed centrifuges that Iraq was counting on to process uranium for its first atomic bomb. Badr also made parts for the Al Hussein missile, one of which killed U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf war and several of which landed in Tel Aviv. Today, the plant still retains a line of powerful machine tools.

The main attraction in Minsk was a company called Belstroyimpex. There the Iraqis looked at high-end machine tools, a production line for making diamond-cutting tools, and another production line for powder metallurgy. Iraqi records show that a contract for these machines, or for an even longer list of equipment, was then being carried out. The final shopping list included the diamond-cutting tools, which can be used to make precision parts for

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nuclear weapons and long-range missiles, and a highly sensitive plasma spray machine that can be used to protect nuclear-weapon components from corrosion. The list also included design work for integrated circuits destined for a military electronics plant that, before the Gulf war, had produced military radars, missile components, and equipment for making nuclear-weapon fuel. The deal was obviously not submitted to the United Nations as required; if it had been, it would never have been approved.

Like so much other contraband entering Iraq, the machines traveled first to the free-trade zone in Aqaba. There they lay until word was given to transfer them to the buyer. An outfit in Amman called the Firas Trading Company served as broker. The confidence Iraq placed in its Jordanian arrangement was a marvel to the UN inspectors. As one of them (a non-native speaker of English) put it colorfully, "Iraq does not consider goods laying in a Jordanian free zone being threatened to loose control."

Indeed not. During visits to the Badr site in 1996 and 1997, UN inspectors discovered both the powder-metallurgy line and the plasma spray machine (the latter manufactured by the Belarus firm Visoky Vacuum). Obviously the contracts had been fulfilled.* As far as anyone can tell, moreover, the Belarus connection is still active: when inspectors visited the Saddam State Establishment—known also as the Saddam Artillery Plant—in 1998, they observed the Iraqis installing fourteen new machines for manufacturing 75-millimeter lenses. The crates were marked "Republic of Belarus, Vitebsk Machine Building Plant" and "Free Trade Zone, Zarka, Jordan." In light of the fact that the plant was making optical sights for artillery, one inspector remarked: "You can bet the lenses were not for eyeglasses."

IN UKRAINE, the Iraqi focus was more specific: missile components. In September 1993, a Ukrainian trader with a Ph.D. in electronics named Yuri Orshansky arrived in Baghdad. He was accompanied by Dr. Yuri Ayzenberg from a Ukrainian firm, Khartron, well known for its ability to design missile-guidance systems. Within two months, an Iraqi delegation would travel to Ukraine to follow up.

The Iraqi delegation was led by Brigadier General Naim Bakr Ali, head of Iraq's Scud missile-guidance program. With him were two officials from Iraq's Missile Research and Development Center, and rounding out the team were Brigadier General Safa from Ibn Al-Haytham, Iraq's largest missile-manufacturing site, and Major Raad from Al-Karama State Establishment, another such site. Their mission was clear: to negotiate agreements for as much help as they could get. As General Naim would himself tell the UN inspectors, his instructions were simple: "If you find something good, sign; if you do not find something good, then don't sign."

He signed. In Ukraine, Orshansky, Ayzenberg, and Naim executed a "protocol"—amounting to an outline of future cooperation—that promised Iraq the keys to a trove of missile technology. Ukraine would sell guidance components for surface-to-surface missiles, help Iraq develop batteries of the latest anti-aircraft missiles, provide equipment for missile research, and even establish a college to train missile experts. To get things started, Iraq asked for price quotes on a test stand for rocket motors, a series of gyroscopes and accelerometers for missile-guidance systems, and high-precision machine tools for making missile parts.

Under questioning, General Naim later claimed that the deal was supposed to take effect only after the embargo was lifted, and hence did not violate UN resolutions. As the inspectors pointed out to him, however, the agreement expressly stipulated that it would come into effect "from the moment it [was] adopted by the governments of Ukraine and Iraq"—that is to say, almost immediately. (Both Naim's superior and the Ukrainian cabinet approved the deal in 1994.) General Naim also claimed that Iraq intended to work only on missiles that could fly under 150 kilometers, permitted under certain UN resolutions. But an appendix to the agreement described a system for "separating the warhead from the bus"; only long-range missiles, which Iraq is not permitted to possess, have warheads that are separated during flight from the rocket engine (or bus) that carries them aloft. In short, Saddam Hussein was aiming to project his power as far as possible.

In November 1994, General Naim led another Iraqi delegation to Ukraine. Aided by many of the same experts, he signed a second protocol as ambitious as the first. Khartron was now to provide four different types of missile guidance, two of them for separable warheads. According to the protocol, Iraq had already given Khartron the data needed to build the first type, and a schedule was included for

* Another piece of evidence that the Jordanian smuggling route was working well turned up in 1998, when the inspectors found a new computer-controlled milling machine at a site that had done missile work before the Gulf war. The machine, built by the Ping Jeng company in Taiwan, had been sent through Aqaba by a Jordanian middleman listed as "Mohanad K. Mohammed." Documents showed that the machine was built in March 1998, only shortly before turning up in Iraq.

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receiving the data for the other three. Khartron also helped the Iraqis work on missile-guidance problems during the visit itself.

Iraq has always sought independence in missile production, and so the second protocol, like the first, took into account the ability to manufacture. To help the Iraqis do the necessary research toward that end, Ukraine agreed to supply laboratories, a wind tunnel, computer software, technical assistance, and training. For developing guidance systems themselves, Iraq would get raw materials, a production line for key parts, testing equipment, and a "clean room" to allow assembly of delicate parts in an atmosphere free of dust or dirt. Iraq would also get a production line to build rocket engines, plus equipment to test the engines and their sub-assemblies.

All in all, Yuri Orshansky would travel to Iraq at least six times between 1993 and 1995, and Iraq would send at least four delegations to Ukraine. But under questioning by the UN inspectors, General Naim claimed that Iraq had never actually received a single import. "No deals were ever finalized, no money was ever transferred, and not one penny was made" by the company he had set up to handle the missile deals. The inspectors, who concluded that Naim "was rarely honest," did not believe his story. Nevertheless, they were unable to find any of the equipment listed in the protocols. None of it turned up at the missile sites they were monitoring, nor could they develop any evidence showing that it might be elsewhere.

In interviews with us, the inspectors have offered two possible explanations for this outcome. Either Iraq bought the equipment and hid it for future use, presumably when the inspection regime would be lifted, or Iraq may have been *only* shopping—comparing prices in Ukraine to those in Russia and Romania, where it was looking at the same kind of equipment. The latter possibility seems unlikely after so many trips, so much consultation, and so many contracts for specific items. More likely by far is that Iraq received some of the Ukrainian equipment it tried so hard to buy, and that the equipment is in use today.

As it turned out, moreover, Orshansky was offering more than just missiles. At an Iraqi site called Al Kawthar, the inspectors found a 300-page file detailing an illegal February 1995 deal for Russian aircraft. The agreement, with Orshansky's firm Montelect, included Mi-17 helicopters and Su-25 fighter planes—military hardware that the embargo unquestionably banned—as well as engines and guidance systems for remotely-controlled drones. The drones were every bit as disquieting an item as the tanks and planes; they could be used to deliver poison gas or germ-warfare agents.

This Iraqi file did not reveal whether the helicopters and fighters were to be sent directly from Russian factories or were to be assembled in Iraq. A firm called the Russian Aviation Trading House was supposed to do the buying in Russia, and a Lebanese company, Amsar Trading, was to handle the shipping of arms into Iraq and of oil out. Livinvest, a Russian company, would obtain the needed "approvals" from the Russian government.

Whether this deal went through is likewise uncertain. The Iraqis claimed it did not, and that they never paid Orshansky anything. Whether or not that is true, he clearly remains in favor in Baghdad, and Ukrainian companies are still willing to trade. Only this past April, according to a news report from Kiev, more than 100 Ukrainian companies, including makers of space and aviation gear, displayed their wares at a Baghdad trade exhibition. The report quoted none other than "the honorary Iraqi consul in Kharkov," Mr. Yuri Orshansky.

WHILE IRAQI delegations were signing contracts in Ukraine, they were also signing them in Romania, in some cases for similar equipment. The main place of interest in Romania was Aerofina, a military firm that Iraqis had visited even before the Gulf war. In February 1994, a group of missile experts returned to Aerofina to ask for help with liquid-fueled missiles. This trip led to still further visits; in January 1995, experts from the Ibn Al Haytham and Al Karama missile sites signed a contract with Aerofina for 250 sets of missile-engine parts that Iraq could not produce itself.

This was, of course, egregiously contrary to the UN embargo. Aerofina nevertheless agreed to provide the special valves, sealing rings, needles, and O-rings that Iraq needed. Some of these parts arrived in Iraq around September 1995, intended for a regulator, the part of a missile engine that maintains thrust.

As in Ukraine, the Iraqis were also looking for missile-guidance components. For $1.16 million, Aerofina agreed in July 1995 to supply twenty sample gyroscopes; also included were the tools and equipment needed to produce them, and the equipment needed to test them. Earlier in 1995, Romania's Industrial Group of the Army similarly agreed to help Iraq develop the propellant for a solid-fueled missile.

In addition to these contracts, the Iraqis managed to get other Romanian firms to sign protocols for an even broader range of assistance. Thus, in March 1995, the company GIA-RA agreed to provide 100 complete missile engines. Another firm,

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Romtechnica, undertook to provide engine-testing facilities, while a third, Turbomechanica, agreed to sell injectors and turbopumps.

Iraqi missile experts were grilled about all of these contracts by the inspectors. Once again the Iraqis would admit to getting only a small number of items—specifically, the parts for the engine regulators. All the other contracts, they claimed, had been canceled for lack of funds. Although the inspectors opine that Iraq received far more than it admits to, all they know for sure is that none of the contracted items ever turned up at the sites they were monitoring.

But they do know one other thing for sure: a considerable number of Romanian firms stood ready to violate the UN embargo. And it seems they still are. In February, a delegation of Romanian parliamentarians reportedly met with members of the Iraqi secret service to negotiate arms deals. The trip was apparently authorized by a Romanian party leader whose brother, a former Romtechnica employee, has been linked to shady arms deals in the past.

FINALLY, THE Iraqis also tried their luck in Russia. In June 1993, the Al Karama State Establishment, in search of guidance components for Scud missiles, decided to employ a Palestinian middleman named Wiham Garbiyah. That September, Garbiyah shepherded an Iraqi delegation through Moscow on a successful hunt not only for the Scud components but for guidance elements for a much more powerful missile, the Soviet SS-N-18, which, after being launched from a nuclear submarine, can hit targets more than 4,000 miles away. Garbiyah's first package of missile parts, which seem to have been mainly samples, arrived in Baghdad in December. It contained Scud components plus at least some parts for the SS-N-18.

By April 1995, Garbiyah was back in Moscow searching for more. In Zagorsk, a town near Moscow famous for its monastery and churches, he managed to buy 120 gyroscopes and accelerometers for long-range missiles. The seller was Niikhsm, a missile-dismantlement plant. Another Russian company, Mars Rotor, obligingly tested the instruments before they left the country. On July 15, 1995, Garbiyah shipped the components to Amman and on July 27 got them through to Baghdad.

It is unclear how many of these particular components the Iraqis wound up with. After being tipped off by intelligence sources, the UN inspectors intercepted one of Garbiyah's subsequent shipments in Jordan. They also pulled a number of guidance components from the Tigris river, where the Iraqis had thrown them to avoid detection. Again, the only thing we know for sure is that Russian firms were ready to sell missile parts in clear violation of the embargo.

CAN SADDAM'S smuggling network be shut down? Only if it is possible to control the cargoes coming into Iraq and the oil going out. Neither will be easy. In addition to the determined leadership of the United States, what is required to control the cargoes is the cooperation of four countries—namely, Belarus, Ukraine, Romania, and Russia—where America's writ does not exactly run strong. Belarus is trying to re-integrate itself with Russia, while Russia itself is doing everything it can to help Saddam. Ukraine is mired in political turmoil. The only comparative bright spot is Romania, whose government took positive action in the 1990's when confronted with the Aerofina deals; there may also be some leverage in Romania's dependence on international loans. But in general the prospects are bleak.

Could controls work at Iraq's borders? To change things there, Jordan and Syria would have to start sending all the money they pay for oil to the UN, or withhold it from Saddam in some other way that would dry up his smuggling accounts. They would also have to start blocking his illicit imports, for which the oil shipments, whether discounted or actually free, are acting as bribes. Why should they do that? And what would replace the vast amount of money they would lose?

There may be answers to these questions, but behind all of them lurks the larger question of the West's political will. While pondering that imponderable commodity, one should reflect upon a particularly chilling item turned up by the UN inspectors: a 1996 directive, from Iraq's powerful Military Industrial Commission, forbidding any personnel associated with Iraq's nuclear-weapon effort "to retire, move, transfer, change housing, etc., without the permission of the Iraqi Atomic Energy Commission."* In other words, Saddam Hussein is working to keep his nuclear-weapon teams intact.

Before the embargo began, these teams had the highest claim to Saddam's resources. Now, as the embargo wanes, and the balances grow in his secret accounts, they can once again buy what they need. Not only is Saddam Hussein back, he is on the way to having nuclear weapons, and the missiles that will deliver them.

* This was after the defection in 1994 of Khidhir Hamza, the regime's top nuclear scientist; see the review of his recent book, *Saddam's Bombmaker*, by Daniel Pipes in the June COMMENTARY.

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Who Is Winning the Intifada?

Gal Luft

A FEW weeks into the *intifada* that broke out at the end of last September, pundits were already debating the nature of the still-emerging military conflict.

Some, impressed by the heavy volume of fire exchanged by both sides, the mounting casualty rate, and the overwhelming, frenzied response of the Arab world at large, concluded that Israel and the Palestinians were already in, or at least on the brink of, war; pessimists among them predicted that further escalation might draw in Arab military forces from Syria, Iraq, Iran, and perhaps even Jordan and Egypt. Others, however, belittled the strategic significance of the showdown. The new *intifada*, they said, was merely a tactical move on the part of Yasir Arafat, utterly characteristic of his usual modus operandi of switching to terror and violence whenever negotiations with Israel reached a standstill. This, for instance, is what he had done in September 1996, prodding his people to riot on the flimsiest of pretexts as a means of forcing the government of Benjamin Netanyahu to pull out of the city of Hebron. In May 2000, in the so-called al-Naqba riots, Arafat repeated the move in an attempt to squeeze still more concessions out of the government of Ehud Barak. In each case, the tactic worked: Netanyahu gave him Hebron; Barak offered the sky.

But the new *intifada* has lasted some nine months by now, and it is still difficult to determine how best to describe it. If Israel is at war, as some continue to insist, it is war of a very peculiar kind. For this is a war in which Arafat, using an Israeli telephone service, has called Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to wish him a happy Passover; in which, apart from intermittent shutdowns, hundreds of Israeli trucks and thousands of Palestinian workers cross the border every day; and in which Palestinian security chiefs and Israeli military commanders occasionally meet in serene settings to coordinate their next moves. In short, it is hardly the kind of war Israel has known before.

But if it is not war, there is no gainsaying the sheer amount of violence and destruction that has been generated. By the beginning of June, about 400 Palestinians and 130 Israelis had been killed, 12,000 Palestinians and 1,000 Israelis wounded. The floundering Palestinian economy has lost more than $4 billion, and the unemployment rate in the Palestinian Authority (PA) has soared to almost 50 percent. As for Israel, the fighting costs it $2 million a day; its tourist industry has been ruined; exports to the PA have declined by more than half; and unemployment has increased by 12 percent.

With a diplomatic resolution far from imminent,

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much less a victory for either side, much about the conflict remains murky.* But not everything. In the media and in the various centers of opinion around the world, Israel has come under unceasing criticism for its alleged use of "disproportionate" or "excessive" force in dealing with Palestinian violence. At the same time, that violence itself is usually described as a spontaneous and wholly justified expression of anger and frustration. Each of *these* characterizations is demonstrably false.

FOR THE Palestinians, 2000 was a year of trial. At Camp David it became clear that the territorial and political concessions Israel was willing to make, unprecedentedly generous though they were, fell short of Palestinian demands for a state in all of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, a capital in east Jerusalem, and the right of all refugees to return to their homes. It also became apparent that what had been the principal means of Palestinian diplomatic leverage—namely, the threat of a unilateral declaration of statehood—was hollow. Three times Arafat set a date to declare his state, each time finding Israel unfazed.

The year 2000 was also a year of Palestinian self-deception. In May, after eighteen long years, Israel had finally withdrawn its security forces from southern Lebanon in what was widely perceived as a humiliating defeat at the hands of the fundamentalist Islamic guerrillas of Hezbollah. If, many Palestinians now reasoned, 300 Islamist militiamen, backed by international pressure, could succeed in driving the mighty Israel Defense Force (IDF) out of Lebanon, why cannot we, with more than 30,000 armed, well-trained troops, drive the war-weary Israelis out of the occupied territories by the same means? From the beginning, thus, Palestinian strategy in the latest *intifada*—for strategy there has been, aplenty—was designed to "Lebanonize" and internationalize the conflict over the West Bank and Gaza, making withdrawal Israel's only option.

So far, this has turned out to be a blunder. Israeli sentiment toward Hebron is not like Israeli sentiment toward Marj Ayoun, and the hills of Judea and Samaria are not the hills of southern Lebanon. Nevertheless, the principal rationale and main strategy of the unfolding Palestinian campaign have remained constant; only the tactics have changed. That campaign has followed a number of well-defined if sometimes overlapping stages, with new ones being initiated upon the exhaustion or apparent failure of previous stages.

In the first two weeks of the uprising, the yellow flag of Hezbollah was almost as prominent in the streets as the flag of the PA, and so were time-tested Hezbollah methods. Massive demonstrations, involving rocks, Molotov cocktails, and gunfire, took place in the outskirts of Palestinian cities and around the checkpoints of the IDF. The most intensive violence occurred against isolated Israeli enclaves like the settlement of Netzarim in Gaza and the Jewish shrine of Joseph's tomb in Nablus.

Israel's withdrawal from this last site on October 7 granted the Palestinians a small victory—and seeming confirmation of the Lebanon model. But the overall price was high. Through the firm but restrained use of rubber bullets, sniper fire, and, when necessary, anti-tank rockets, Israel in the first two weeks caused the death of more than 100 Palestinians and the wounding of more than 2,000.

In this first stage of the *intifada*, most of the actual fighting on the Palestinian side was being conducted by members of Tanzim, the armed faction of Arafat's Fatah organization, who typically fired at Israeli forces from behind the cover of stone-throwing young men and children. Unlike the PA's official security services, these fighters had not been authorized by the Oslo accords to carry firearms in the first place, and they were poorly trained. Nevertheless, Palestinian violence was remarkable for its intensity, scope, and duration, which in turn helps put the high Palestinian casualty rate into perspective. In the first six weeks of the riots, IDF soldiers faced more than 1,300 armed attacks, almost twice as many as had occurred against Israeli targets in the seven prior years combined, and about the same as the number of Hezbollah attacks in Lebanon over the course of an entire year. The use of snipers and automatic-weapons fire from behind the shield of a rioting crowd or from houses of innocent civilians placed Israeli troops in real danger, forcing them to respond with their own weapons. Although inevitably

* One would look in vain for illumination in the recently released report of the fact-finding committee appointed by then-President Bill Clinton and headed by former Senator George Mitchell. In the vision of the Mitchell Report, a pure product of the let's-all-get-together-and-be-nice school of American diplomacy, a carefully nurtured "culture of peace" in the Middle East has been "shattered" by a failure of understanding on the two sides, both of which, though operating under unfortunate "political constraints" of their own, must nevertheless now "reaffirm their mutual commitments," undertake "confidence-building" measures, and "resume negotiations." The report's earnestly evenhanded stance, obliterating the differences between the two societies and taking no position on the history of the conflict between them, may or may not serve its ostensible goal of making the situation seem one in which the United States should once again attempt to serve as an intermediary. As a guide to the conflict itself, especially its military aspect, it is worse than useless.

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there were casualties among civilians, most of the Palestinian dead had in fact been seen firing at IDF soldiers.

In the very early days, Arafat himself contributed more to the war effort by his absence than by his presence. When not wrapped in silence in his bunker, he preferred traveling the globe to leading his people in the streets. But on the tenth day of the riots, he finally issued his first directive, instructing his Tanzim leaders to limit the use of firearms in demonstrations. This would not only save precious ammunition but, more importantly, would give the uprising an image of popular struggle rather than guerrilla war. Use of firearms, Arafat ordered, should begin only after sunset—when the international television crews were gone. Under the cover of darkness, Palestinian fighters would gun down as many IDF soldiers and Jewish settlers as they could.

Nor was this Arafat's only stroke. An inveterate master of turning powerlessness into power, he deftly exploited the disparity in Israeli and Palestinian casualty figures. For one thing, those figures allowed him to win the sympathy of the world by presenting Israel as a ruthless aggressor against defenseless civilians. For another, the blood of the martyrs effectively lubricated the wheels of the *intifada* itself, as daily parades and funeral demonstrations bred more clashes with IDF soldiers, only to cause more funerals and greater frenzy the following day.

None of this, however, was enough to shift public opinion where it most mattered, namely, within Israel. If, according to the Lebanon model, the Jewish state was going to have to bleed its way out of the territories, Arafat and his lieutenants would have to try harder.

Thus began the next stage, which was (and to some extent still is) the "war for the roads." On almost a nightly basis, Palestinian militiamen now ambushed and attacked Jewish settlers driving in the West Bank and Gaza. Although some of these "hit-and-run" operations were successful, the majority—770 since October in the West Bank alone—were not. Nevertheless, they forced the IDF to expend much effort in order to secure the settlers' freedom of movement, closing high-risk routes, increasing the number of road blocks, and limiting the nighttime movement of the Palestinian population. The local flora also suffered: more than 4,000 trees along the roads of the West Bank were cut, and hundreds of acres of agricultural land were flattened in order to deny ambush sites to terrorists.

This last proved to be another diplomatic windfall for Arafat, who extracted from it what he could. But by mid-November the "war for the roads" was still faring poorly on the ground, and it was becoming clear that limiting the conflict to the occupied territories and the settler community would not suffice. The time had come to export the *intifada* into the heart of Israel.

THE DIVISION of labor was clear: Tanzim, along with select bodies of the PA's security forces—including Arafat's presidential guard (Force 17), general intelligence, and preventive security—would continue their attacks on Israeli targets in the territories, while Hamas and Islamic Jihad were given a green light to execute terror attacks in Israel's main cities. Violating all of its previously signed agreements with Israel, the PA released from jail more than 80 Islamic activists, and the PA-controlled media began successfully to prepare Palestinian opinion for the use of terror as a legitimate instrument of the wider struggle. According to the Palestinian pollster Khalil Shikaki, public support for suicide attacks, which had stood at 20 percent in 1995-96, now rose to about 70 percent, and Palestinians at large ceased to distinguish attacks on Israeli army targets from attacks on settlers or on civilians inside Israel's pre-1967 borders.

In short order, Islamist groups launched some two dozen bombing and shooting attacks against civilian targets in cities like Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Hadera, Netanya, and Kfar Sava. Palestinian terrorists also detonated a roadside bomb next to a schoolbus full of children near the Jewish settlement of Kfar Darom.

To these terror tactics Israel responded harshly, answering bullets with tank fire and destroying Palestinian military installations and Tanzim headquarters with rockets fired from helicopters. Israeli security forces also targeted Palestinian military and political activists suspected of involvement in the planning and execution of terror attacks. At least a dozen were gunned down or blown up in various ways.

But the Israeli response also emphasized precision, and indeed was designed to answer the mounting international outcry over the supposed use of "excessive" force. Helicopter attacks were preceded by advance warning, allowing Palestinians to evacuate targeted buildings. Assassinations caused no collateral damage. As opposed to the PA, which promoted indiscriminate killing, Israel's punishments were both selective and effective, causing fewer accidental deaths. And with this de-

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clining casualty rate, not only did world sympathy for the PA also begin to fade somewhat but so, too, did the ardor of Palestinians themselves. Although incidents of shooting, grenade throwing, and bombing have hardly ended—a suicide bombing at a mall in Netanya on May 18 would kill five Israelis, wound over 100, and elicit a counterattack on Palestinian security installations by F-16 warplanes, and would then be followed by an even more spectacular and deadly bombing at a Tel Aviv discotheque on June 1—between November and February alone the number of such incidents declined from about 1,000 a month to fewer than 550.

Once again, the time had come to reinvigorate the *intifada*. As Arafat well understood, the one thing that could be counted on to galvanize world opinion and bring about an internationalization of the conflict was an outright atrocity committed by Israel. The precedent here was an incident during a 1996 operation aimed at destroying the Hezbollah infrastructure in southern Lebanon. Then, IDF artillery shells hit a United Nations compound at Kafr Kana where Lebanese civilians were taking shelter, killing over 100; the resulting uproar brought a speedy end to the operation. To accomplish something similar, the Palestinians moved on to a new military phase: the use of indirect fire against entire Jewish settlements.

UNDER THE terms of Oslo, Palestinian weaponry was to be restricted to pistols, rifles, and machine guns. Artillery weapons were utterly ruled out. Oslo or no Oslo, however, the PA had either smuggled or manufactured hundreds if not thousands of mortar shells of 82-millimeter caliber, capable of a range of up to three miles. The Palestinians had also acquired 107-millimeter Katyusha rockets, with a range of up to five miles. These weapons were in the hands of some of Arafat's forces as well as Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

On January 30, Palestinian artillery was put to use for the first time when a mortar shell hit the settlement of Netzarim in Gaza. For the next six weeks, mortar attacks on Gush Katif, the Jewish settlement bloc in Gaza, were an almost daily occurrence. Then, on March 18, the Palestinians took a significant escalatory step, attacking the kibbutz of Nahal Oz in the western Negev—the first Jewish settlement within the old 1967 borders to be fired at. A few weeks later, in an even more significant step, Sderot, an Israeli town of 23,000 whose citizens had voted overwhelmingly for Ariel Sharon, also fell target to Palestinian mortars.

The Palestinian use of artillery fire had real strategic importance. First, it implied that the war was no longer directed exclusively against the Israeli occupation but against Israel itself. Second, by using weapons prohibited by the Oslo accords, the PA signaled that it did not consider itself bound by the security provisions of that agreement. Third, the PA appeared to have rededicated itself to emulating the Hezbollah model in Lebanon.

During the years of Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon, Katyusha attacks on towns along Israel's northern border had regularly disrupted civilian life. Since the 1970's, the city of Kiryat Shmona, similar in population to Sderot, had been hit by more than 4,000 rockets and suffered more than 380 civilian casualties. In turn, the IDF took severe retaliatory measures, with the air force launching thousands of attacks against Lebanese targets and occasionally inflicting casualties among innocent civilians—as, notoriously, at Kafr Kana. This "disproportionate" reaction was exactly what Arafat wanted to achieve; to accomplish it, a city like Sderot had to become Israel's new Kiryat Shmona.

The Palestinian mortar campaign presented the IDF with a serious operational and technical challenge. The idea of tens of thousands of Israelis living under the threat of Palestinian mortar fire was intolerable, potentially forcing the Israeli government to invest millions of dollars in fortifying these localities and compensating their inhabitants for damage. But the harsh reality was that the IDF, despite great efforts to detect the sources of fire and retaliate with helicopter and tank fire, had, and for that matter still has, no magic solution to the problem.

Instead, Israel has chosen to meet it by moving occasionally and temporarily into what is known as Area A, the areas designated as being under the PA's exclusive control, and razing sites that are suspected of mortar activity. In its first incursion, on April 17, IDF bulldozers cleared an area of no more than a few hundred square yards in northern Gaza where mortars were being fired at Sderot. This day-long reentry into acknowledged PA territory earned a U.S. State Department rebuke as an "excessive and disproportionate" act and was thus diplomatically self-defeating; but it was militarily successful. Mortar fire at Sderot came to a virtual halt, and Palestinians were given to understand that the IDF would not be deterred from acting again in similar fashion if need be. Since the initial raid, the IDF has temporarily reentered Palestinian areas at least three more times, and each time world reaction has become more indifferent.

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WHICH—GIVE or take the bustlings of international diplomacy, the vying for the sympathy of the media, and the occasional "ceasefire"—brings us more or less to where we are today. On the Palestinian side, although domestic support for the *intifada* continues to run high, after the first few weeks the populace has refrained from taking an active part in the fighting; most sectors of the Palestinian community have little taste for actively confronting Israeli troops on a daily basis. As for Israelis themselves, while more than 70 percent believe that the government should adopt harsher measures and "let the IDF win," they know about the *intifada* by and large from media reports. The 200,000 settlers in the West Bank and Gaza are, of course, prime targets, but, without making light of the psychological strain of living under the constant threat of terror, most Israelis maintain relatively normal lives. Moreover, unlike in the earlier intifada of 1987-93, when the burden fell on IDF reserve units, in the current conflict there has been little use of reservists.

On the ground, what this means is that the task of deciding the direction and intensity of the conflict has fallen to the military chiefs on both sides. War in the hands of generals, it has been said, is trouble-in-the-making. In the PA's case, if not in Israel's, it really is.

Israeli generals often disagree with their political leadership on operational issues, but the supremacy of statesmen over brass is clear and unchallenged. By and large, moreover, the military and civilian leadership are well coordinated. Political directives are promptly translated into military action, while operational needs are effectively backed up by policy.

The situation in the PA is far more complicated and far more fragile. Arafat's supreme authority over the security establishment, better known as "the Palestinian police," is rarely challenged, but his operational control is gradually diminishing. Prior to the outbreak of the *intifada*, he was the only person able to arbitrate among 12 security apparatuses—including five intelligence bodies, national-security forces, the presidential guard, civil police, and a coast guard—each of them more preoccupied with undermining the other than with performing its work. Being at the same time the chairman of the PA, the head of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and the head of its political-military branch (Fatah), he was also able to maintain a precarious balance between the security services and the Islamic opposition.

BUT THE *intifada* has changed all that, principally by multiplying the number of armed bodies and popular-resistance committees in the West Bank and Gaza. Each faction has its own agenda, its own leadership, its own constituency, and its own desire to prove that it has made the most significant contribution to the Palestinian struggle. Though Arafat is still a symbol of Palestinian nationalism, his grip over the different factions has loosened; and in several recent incidents, armed Palestinian bodies openly challenged his directives. In addition, many employees of the Palestinian security forces who have not received their payments for months are tempted to offer their services and expertise to the newly established militias.

There are festering resentments as well. Despite the fact that many Palestinian policemen have taken part in the shooting, Arafat has so far issued no order allowing the units of his National Security Force (NSF)—a 20,000-man infantry divided into nine well-trained battalions equipped with armored vehicles, machine guns, and anti-tank weapons—to take part in the fighting. These are Arafat's "Republican Guard"; throwing them into the fray would be tantamount to an open declaration of war on Israel, and would likely lead to their annihilation. Younger lieutenants and privates in the NSF may be eager for sacrifice, but their generals, despite coming under severe criticism for not doing their share, feel otherwise. Many of them are veterans of the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA), the standing army of the PLO that was established in 1965 and fought Israel in three wars. "We have seen a real war," one NSF senior officer has remarked, "and we know what it is like fighting the IDF when the gloves are taken off. The local militias are misleading the people to believe that Israel has shown us its real might."

In sum, Arafat's security forces are in a process of disintegration. Morale is low, compensation is even lower, discipline non-existent. The PA and its complex military apparatus are sliding into a state of anarchy. This means that the next level of escalation may be dictated not by Arafat but rather by one of the heads of the fringe groups operating in the territories. Terrorist organizations from Lebanon—such as Hezbollah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and the PFLP-General Command (PFLP-GC)—have established cells in Arafat's territory, providing them with training, finance, weapons, and moral guidance.

On May 7, for example, the Israeli Navy intercepted a boat loaded with a large quantity of advanced arms and ammunition; the cargo, sent by the

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PFLP-GC, included Katyusha rockets, mortars, and anti-aircraft and anti-tank missiles. It is unclear who was to be the recipient of these weapons. It is also unclear how many similar shipments have reached their destination, though at least three have been confirmed. What *is* clear is that, if used, these weapons will bring about a serious intensification in the fighting. Katyusha rockets fired from Gaza can reach the city of Ashkelon where more than 100,000 Israelis live. Fired from the West Bank, they could reach most cities along Israel's coastal plain. They could also hit Israel's Ben-Gurion airport.

Low-tech heavy weapons in the hands of Palestinian organizations could yet present a real challenge, greater than terror bombings, to the man elected prime minister on the pledge to restore security to the Israeli people. If he responds massively, his wrath may be Arafat's last hope to benefit from a Kosovo-type situation. But whether even that situation would unfold as Arafat imagines, mandating an Israeli retreat under international pressure, is itself an open question—perhaps, at the moment, *the* open question.

Military wisdom holds that in wars of attrition, guerrillas hold the upper hand. "The guerrilla wins if he does not lose," said Henry Kissinger, while "the conventional army loses if it does not win." This may have been true for a war like that waged by the United States in Vietnam, which took place thousands of miles away from home. In Israel's case, the war has reached the outskirts of its capital, and terrorism into its heartland cities. This has tended to deepen most Israelis' belief in their cause, and thus to enhance their prospects of disproving Kissinger's axiom.

The Palestinians, in the meantime, have been caught by surprise by Israel's resolve and unity. (One can hardly blame them; prior to the outbreak of the *intifada*, the signs of an almost terminal war-weariness in Israel were everywhere.) They also realize that, beyond rhetoric and token financial assistance, the Arab states are less than enthusiastic about joining the battle for Palestine. Some are beginning to see as well that Arafat's intransigence has led them to an impasse. But stopping the violence without any significant political dividend, especially after so many have been killed and maimed, is unthinkable. Over the course of eight or nine months the Palestinians have greatly improved their tactical sophistication, and they have shown that they have the means and the will to go on. In the absence of a diplomatic breakthrough, they may see their only viable option as upping the ante still further and thereby regaining their lost momentum.

But they may be again miscalculating—on the basis, ironically, of a correct perception of Israel's determination, so far, to behave with restraint. While the world cries "excessive" and "disproportionate," Palestinians themselves have reason to know what many dispassionate military analysts similarly believe: that, considering the intensity and the duration of the violence, the number of those killed and wounded could easily have been much higher, and that Israel has, in fact, responded with moderation. If from nowhere else, the Palestinians have reason to know this from living with the random brutality of their own regime, and even more so from the history of their own region.

It is hardly a secret that the Arab countries rushing to proclaim Israel's actions a "crime against humanity" have compiled some of the world's most heinous records when it comes to the use of lethal force against civilian unrest. In September 1970, the Jordanian military killed more than 5,000 Palestinians in the course of a mere two weeks; in January 1977, Egyptian security forces killed 80 unarmed people in just two days of demonstrations; in February 1982, the Syrian military killed between 20,000 and 30,000 civilians in the city of Hama; in July 1987, Saudi security forces killed 400 Iranian pilgrims in a single day; and so it goes.

Israel, of course, operates by different standards, being subject to the constraints of law and of ingrained democratic habit. Still, a healthier fear of the Israeli military may, in the end, be the only force capable of restraining a Palestinian step into the abyss. One hundred forty years ago, a governor of Texas advised his people against joining the southern Confederacy. "The North is determined to save the Union," Sam Houston said. "They are not fiery and impulsive as you are for they live in colder climates. But when they begin to move in a given direction they move in a steady momentum and [with the] perseverance of a mighty avalanche."

Since anything is in theory possible, it is possible that Israel's resolve will yet weaken and Arafat will be proved right—in which case the cost in blood, on all sides, will be unimaginably higher still. This is something a former Texas governor of our own day might keep in mind as he contemplates the temptations and the pitfalls of American involvement in the Middle East.

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How Race Is Written in America

Dan Seligman

WIDELY JUDGED the world's greatest newspaper, the *New York Times* endlessly enriches the lives of educated New Yorkers. And not only of us locals. The paper's reach extends far beyond the city, beyond its national edition, beyond even its news service, to which papers everywhere may subscribe. Because of its exhaustive coverage and basic perspective—liberal, high-minded, politically correct—media decision-makers across the land inevitably assume that, in deciding what is news, and how to play it, you cannot go wrong taking your guidance from the *Times*. Even those of us who find its mindset infuriating have trouble living without the paper. An invariable early order of business in the boondocks or the Caribbean is figuring out how to get your hands on the *Times*.

Which does not necessarily mean you are going to read it all. I confess to not having read much of the six-week, fifteen-part series on race that originally appeared in the *Times* a year ago, was awarded a Pulitzer Prize this past April, and has recently appeared as a book, *How Race Is Lived in America: Pulling Together, Pulling Apart.** This was partly because it became clear early on that each of the articles would be long (6,000 or 7,000 words) and rambling, and—in something of a departure for the *Times*—lacking in any crisply summarizable main point.

The *Times* has a way of speaking with a forked tongue when it comes to race. The subject is sensitive everywhere on the planet, but it is especially tricky for humane and liberal-minded journalists who see themselves (correctly) as major participants in a mixed-race society's public dialogue. From much of its everyday coverage, at any rate, readers of the *Times* might plausibly infer that its editors think of the ideal feature story as one involving racial minorities, especially blacks and Hispanics, victimized by heartless discrimination and brutality. A search of the online archive Nexis for 2000 shows 267 articles in the *Times* that mention "racial profiling," their subjects ranging from the federal espionage case against the Chinese-American scientist Wen Ho Lee to the stop-and-search practices of the New Jersey state police. In the same victimological vein, the phrase "police brutality" appeared in 591 articles during the year.

A high fraction of those latter articles turn out to be bad-mouthings of the Giuliani administration's aggressive take-back-the-streets theory of police work, which in New York City plainly reduced crime in minority neighborhoods—but which was repeatedly asserted in the *Times* to have inspired fear of the cops among poor blacks and Hispanics. A *New York Times Magazine* article by James Traub earlier this year commented sympathetically on the Reverend Al Sharpton's use of the phrase "occupying army" to describe the feelings prevalent in minority communities about New York Police Department tactics.

When there is a genuine case of police brutality, like

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the ghastly torturing of Abner Louima in a Brooklyn station house in 1997, the *Times* is seemingly unable to let go of the subject, or to spare its readers reminders of exactly what happened. The running Nexis total of articles mentioning "Louima" in proximity to "rectum" is now up to 174. Seemingly determined to build up the brutality count, the *Times* has often linked the Louima case to the 1999 Amadou Diallo case, a truly dishonest conflation of quite different events. Purposeful police brutality is one thing, but Diallo, as the courts have established, was plainly the victim of a tragic mistake made by cops in a split-second decision. He was killed in a hail of 41 bullets, and the *Times* cannot let go of that detail, either. A Nexis search for "Diallo" within 30 words of "41" recently yielded 253 hits in the *Times*.

Even as the *Times* was celebrating the Pulitzer Prize for its race series, the paper's coverage of race was scaling new heights of tendentiousness, with the civic violence that erupted in Cincinnati after the fatal police shooting of a young black man being described by *Times* reporters as "protests and vandalism" rather than as what it obviously was—a series of race riots. While the local media provided graphic accounts of the four-day course of events in Cincinnati—widespread arson, politicians sequestered inside City Hall and protected from mobs by a phalanx of police, marauding bands of young black men stopping cars driven by whites and beating their occupants—*Times* reporters averted their eyes from such details.

Has the *Times*'s marquee series on race, now brought together between hardcovers, managed to escape this relentlessly ideological agenda? The heart of the book consists of fifteen chapters—originally the series articles—each about some race-suffused situation that will presumably leave readers wanting to know more about the participants' inner lives. All of the chapters are readable, but the authors nowhere tell you the main point of the exercise, or even if it has one. As it happens, this failure to state a thesis, much less the *Times*'s usual thesis of rampant discrimination, was quite deliberate.

In the book's introduction, *Times* executive editor Joseph Lelyveld reports that, from the outset, the editors and reporters involved in the project decided to set aside the ordinary rules of their trade. They promised themselves

> not to be glib in a way that journalists normally consider to be mandatory, not to force the articles into a thematic grid of our own devising, but rather to tell the stories we found as honestly and directly as we knew how and then leave it to our readers to reach their own conclusions on what our narratives actually meant. In the jargon of the newsroom, we made this revolutionary and humbling promise to ourselves by stipulating . . . that there would be no "nut grafs" in the series. A nut graf is the paragraph that comes high up in a newspaper article and points as clearly and succinctly as possible to the themes that give the article its essential meaning and point. According to our normal standards and practices, running long articles about the real situations of people without the aid and comfort of nut grafs is an invitation to confusion, even anarchy. . . . Here, for once, all our instincts told us to trust our readers to find their own way—or, rather, individual ways in the worlds we hoped to portray.

This seems weirdly inadequate. The *Times* had plausibly identified race in America as a subject of transcendent importance. Lelyveld's introduction refers to black-white relations as "the central conundrum of American democracy." The editors poured enormous resources into the series. Lelyveld identifies it as "the largest commitment of time and talent the *New York Times* has ever given to a single series—larger than even the Pentagon Papers." Like every other *Times* series one can think of, the one during the Nixon administration on the Pentagon Papers had a main point ("They're lying!"). Yet when this recent series on race was all over, the editors opted not to tell the world what if anything they had discovered, and as a reason offered only some unelaborated "instincts." Why would they do this?

The situations profiled in the fifteen articles range all over the lot. Among the chapters I found most interesting was a report on the ups and downs of a young white quarterback in Louisiana who was so desperate to play college football that he ended up enrolling at Southern University, a traditionally black college. Other notable contributions include a chapter titled "Why Harlem Drug Cops Don't Discuss Race"; a somewhat incestuous look at the mixed-race newsroom of the *Beacon Journal* of Akron, Ohio, which had itself won a Pulitzer Prize for an earlier series on race; an entry from Maplewood, New Jersey, tracing the friendship of three girls—one white, one black, and one half-Jewish and half-Puerto Rican—during their first year in high school; a distinctly bloody view from the factory floor of a Smithfield Ham slaughterhouse in rural North Carolina, where blacks, whites, Native Americans, and Mexicans each operate their own separate assembly lines; and the final chapter, by *Times* correspondent Don Terry, an affecting account of his own life growing up with a white mother and a black

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father (who ultimately got violent and was taken away).

Rounding out the book are Lelyveld's introduction; an opinion poll commissioned by the *Times*, which generally indicates that blacks are far less likely than whites to think race relations are good these days; and assorted comments on the project by those who participated in it, from whom we learn, inter alia, that race relations at the *Times* itself leave something to be desired—a thought that is not, unfortunately, further developed.

As for the origins of the series, Lelyveld writes that the paper's interest in such a project may have begun with the O.J. Simpson trial or possibly earlier, with the case of Tawana Brawley, the Hudson Valley black teenager who in 1987 fabricated a tale of having been gang-raped by whites. In any event, he tells us, the *Times* has long had "this itch, this wish to do something ambitious on the theme of race in America," and was looking for a way to do it that went beyond the usual dreary data on income and education.

This the paper certainly has done. Reporters were allowed to conduct their interviews over the course of many months, sometimes as long as a year, and apparently got to know their subjects well, often forming friendships with them. The idea, according to Lelyveld, was to "go deep" and "hang in there." The book includes the transcript of a round-table discussion among reporters and editors who had worked on the series, in the course of which you run into this self-congratulatory reminiscence by reporter Janny Scott:

> In these situations, you have the license . . . to go . . . immediately to the heart of the matter. And all of a sudden you can ask the kinds of questions that you would normally never be able to ask. . . . That was the most exhilarating thing. You could ask all these taboo questions.

THIS READER, however, saw no sign of taboo questions. Indeed, the core difficulty of the book, and the key to its anomalies as a *Times* project, lies in its avoidance of taboos. Instead, the book gets caught in the inescapable tension between two decidedly conventional propositions, both of which it treats as self-evidently true but which happen to be at odds with each other. Proposition No. 1 is that "diversity," understood to mean mainly racial or ethnic variety, is a powerful source of strength in our society. Proposition No. 2 is that, deep down inside, we are all the same. To push both of these ideas simultaneously is to guarantee reporting that ties itself in knots or, at the very least, turns all wobbly and evasive any time the proverbial ten-foot pole gets close to any genuine taboos—like when the subject of racial variety threatens to turn into the subject of actual racial differences.

In the *Times* itself (as opposed to the book), a few recent instances of this phenomenon have been especially memorable. Case in point: a recent article titled "Skin Deep: Shouldn't a Pill Be Colorblind?" The article is a dreadful muddle. It begins with news about clinical trials run by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to develop heart medicines targeted exclusively at African-Americans. This effort might seem quite reasonable since, as we are reminded in the opening paragraph, blacks suffer disproportionately from heart failure and high blood pressure. But the design of the FDA study implies that there are important physiological differences between blacks and whites—to the *Times*, definitely a suspect idea. And soon enough one sees the reporter reaching for the ten-foot pole. Readers are reminded at length that UNESCO, the American Anthropological Association, and various other authority figures believe that race is "purely a social convention with no biological significance," and they are informed about studies indicating that genetic differences between the races are trivial. Although the article also notes at one point that "even tiny genetic differences between populations can have powerful health consequences," it rapidly backs away from the ominous implications of this statement, and toward the end dwells on the thought that observed black-white differences in heart disease may reflect poverty and stress, not biology. Readers who make it to the finish come away without a clue about whether the FDA study is a good or bad idea, or even how it is being conducted.

The *Times* has also been weighing in heavily on racial regroupings revealed by the 2000 Census. A recent article leaned hard on the fact that New York City's population, swollen by immigration, was for the first time above 8 million. This was hailed as a sign of the city's resurgence and its dynamic economy, which it is. But completely buried in the story was the newsworthy flip-side of these numbers: that despite the city's obvious resurgence, its non-Hispanic white population, which as recently as 1980 formed a majority, has continued to flee, dropping by a whopping 12 percent over the past decade to a mere 35 percent of the city's total.

The *Times*'s commitments evidently leave it unable to see a declining white population in New York as big news. What seems truly bizarre about this mental block is that the *Times*'s own world, not to mention its profitability, depends overwhelmingly on the support of non-Hispanic whites. The demographics of *Times* readers are unfortunately not available to me, but, as any rider of the New York City bus or subway system will readily attest, the demographic profile of *Times* readers is overwhelmingly white. A similar statement can be made about the city's cultural institutions. The

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New Yorkers who go to the museums, theaters, opera, ballet, and, for that matter, sports events are disproportionately of European ancestry. How can the significant decline of this population segment not be treated as a major matter?

Still, for appreciating the *Times*'s sheer lack of candor about systematic differences among racial groups, there is no beating *How Race Is Lived in America*. Nowhere among the scores of characters populating this book do we encounter anyone who might give us insight into the high crime rate among blacks and Hispanics—a central and obvious source of racial tension. (The only prisoner we meet is a no-good white man in a work-release program at the Smithfield slaughterhouse.) Nowhere do we encounter the idea that there are well-established personality differences among the races (e.g., blacks tend to be the most sociable, Asians the least, and whites somewhere in between). Least of all does the book confront the taboo that is arguably most relevant to its subject: racial differences in IQ. The closest the *Times* gets to this is in the article about the three young ladies of different races who became friends at middle school in Maplewood, New Jersey.

This community, the reporter makes clear, is dominated by people of liberal inclinations who worry about white flight and place a high value on diversity. Roughly half of the school's students are white and half are minority. Many of them—not just the three profiled in the article—have interracial friendships. Or at least they do up to the end of middle school. By that time, they have begun to move apart, and when they get to high school, "race becomes as much a fault line in their world as in the one their parents hoped to move beyond."

The reason, we learn, is that the kids are now grouped by "perceived ability," which leaves whites and minorities in different classes, and different social settings. The article makes clear in a brief postscript that after being the best of buddies for years, the three girls ended up not particularly close. But it tells us nothing explicit about the academic tracks to which the three girls were assigned, and certainly nothing about their IQ's.

Racial differences in mental ability are an excruciatingly difficult matter to talk about, and one can sympathize with the inclination of reporters to give it a wide berth. (On the most widely used test, the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, the average black-white difference is a considerable 15 IQ points.) But the absence of this subject in so ambitious an examination of race in America is a big, big problem. If the nation's premier newspaper is determined to write candidly about black-white interaction across the board—is pledged to "go deep" and "hang in there"—how can it go shallow and walk away from one of the thorniest issues affecting "how race is lived in America"?

It is a fact of life that people naturally gravitate to friends with interests and ability levels somewhat similar to their own. Surely this phenomenon has something to do with a recurring theme in the *Times* series: namely, the "distance" that whites and minorities put between themselves. Examples include the broken friendship of the schoolgirls in Maplewood; the ongoing tension between two columnists at the *Akron Beacon Journal*—one black, one white—sparked by that paper's own series on race; and the white quarterback at the black college, who finally leaves for another school, weary of "all the daily irritations that go with being in the minority." In fact, some version of this process is present in most of the articles. There is the oddball white man known as Upski, who had devoted his youth to the black-dominated world of hip-hop music but eventually discovers, according to the reporter, that, "As you get older, holding on to your hip-hop values seemed a lot harder if you were white"; and there are the two high-tech business executives—one black, one white—who start a company as close friends, only to go their separate ways after the white partner comes to play the leading role.

Inescapable as the distance problem appears, nowhere in the book does one encounter any serious interpretation of it. What one keeps reading, instead, are all too vague references to groups being "divided by mistrust and misunderstandings" (to quote a line about the *Beacon Journal* newsroom). Most of the chapters are about situations in which we initially are given reason to hope that different racial groups will (in Lelyveld's phrase) "reach across the divide," only to discover ultimately that they are voluntarily separating themselves. The book's subtitle—"Pulling Together, Pulling Apart"—is thus peculiarly apt, if utterly unexplained.

But this may offer a clue to the *Times*'s puzzling posture about the significance of its own reporting—its decision, that is, not to extract any wider meaning from its series on race but to leave that interesting chore to its readers. I have no doubt that, just as Joseph Lelyveld predicts, different readers of *How Race Is Lived in America* will come to different conclusions. But I surely will not be alone in seeing the book as further evidence that Americans of all races generally prefer to live and work among people racially like themselves—a distinctly subversive thought to a great liberal institution that, when not busy decrying the country's supposedly pervasive racism, feels obliged to proclaim that diversity is wonderful and that deep down inside, we are all the same.

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Bob Kerrey, War Criminal?

Gabriel Schoenfeld

"Bob Kerrey a baby-killer? Laughing, literate Bob Kerrey?" So wondered Mary McGrory in the pages of the *Washington Post*. And so have many others wondered as, for the first time in years, the war in Vietnam has erupted once again in newspapers and opinion journals.

The last significant skirmish came in 1995, when former Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara drew fire from all sides in declaring he had known early on that the U.S. had been "wrong, terribly wrong" in committing itself in the 1960's to defend South Vietnam against Communist aggression.* Now another round of recrimination and reproaches, as well as calls for an inquest and even a war-crimes tribunal, has greeted the revelation that Bob Kerrey, a former Senator from Nebraska who is now the president of the New School for Social Research in New York—and a decorated Vietnam veteran—had led a unit of Navy SEALs in a military operation in which civilians were killed, perhaps wantonly.

The story of Kerrey's raid was first uncovered in 1998 by Gregory L. Vistica, then a reporter at *Newsweek*. But *Newsweek* declined to run Vistica's scoop at a moment when it might have derailed Kerrey's fledgling presidential candidacy, and the story lay gathering dust for over two years. In late April, it was finally published in the *New York Times Magazine*, where it ignited this year's furious controversy.

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Vistica offers a gripping account. On the night of February 25, 1969, a unit led by Kerrey was assigned to find and seize, or kill, a Vietcong leader in Thanh Phong, a remote peasant village in the Mekong Delta. According to what Kerrey himself told Vistica, as he and his group of SEALs approached the hamlet they encountered several men in a hooch (a Vietnamese hut) whom they presumed to be Vietcong watchmen and whom, to avoid betraying their own presence, they swiftly killed. A short time later, Kerrey and his men came under fire from the village itself, and immediately returned fire from a distance of about 100 yards, letting loose a fusillade of approximately 1,200 rounds of ammunition and an armor-piercing rocket. After the shooting stopped, they approached the center of the hamlet and found a scene of horror: no Vietcong guerrillas at all, but fourteen or so women and children all clumped together, all of them unarmed, all of them dead.

That, at least, is Kerrey's side of the story; it is disturbing enough, raising more than a few questions about whether he had done anything to deserve the Bronze Star he was awarded for his soldiering that night. (The official citation speaks only of 21 Vietcong dead, making no mention of civilian casualties.) But Vistica also found one member of Kerrey's unit with something even more troubling to recount. Gerhard Klann, a twenty-year

* See McNamara's *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*, which I reviewed in the June 1995 Commentary.

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SEAL veteran who had been in on the action that night, told Vistica that the first hooch was inhabited not by watchmen but by a Vietnamese family: an elderly man and woman and three children under twelve. Kerrey, according to Klann, gave the order to kill them, which his men then proceeded to do with knives. When Klann had difficulty dispatching the old man, Kerrey himself stepped in, putting his knee on the man's chest and holding him down while Klann dragged a blade across his throat.

Having finished this grisly task, the SEALs (in Klann's account) then headed off to the center of the hamlet, where they rounded up all the villagers—only women and children were found—and debated what to do. To facilitate their own escape from the area, and to insure that the villagers did not alert any nearby Vietcong, they finally decided to shoot them all. This, according to Klann, they did, at Kerrey's order, in two bursts of automatic machine-gun fire of approximately 30 seconds each.

In short, Kerrey stands accused in Vistica's article of being at best an active participant in a horrific incident involving innocent civilians and at worst of being an outright war criminal, guilty of murdering women and children in cold blood.

In an effort to take the sting out of both these accusations, and especially the latter, six of the SEALs who had been under Kerrey's command that night were quickly brought together in the wake of the *Times Magazine* article to issue a public statement denying there had been an execution and declaring, "We took fire, and we returned fire." A clearly shaken Kerrey also held a press conference in which he expressed remorse over the "atrocity" and spoke of the need for "healing," while also offering a half-hearted denial of Klann's charge: "We did not go out on a mission with the intent of killing innocent people. I feel guilty because of what happened, not because of what we intended to do." Speaking at his university, the New School, an institution that in the late 1960's and early 1970's had been heavily engaged in the antiwar movement, Kerrey begged for understanding in language he hoped his colleagues would comprehend: "Look at my [political] record," he said. "I don't think you will find that I am yellow-dog imperialist scum."

In some quarters, Kerrey's evident anguish and soul-searching earned him sympathy. James Larocca, who as a young Navy officer had patrolled the Mekong Delta the year before Kerrey served, and who today is the dean of Southhampton College in New York, wrote in *Newsday* that "What we must do now is help this man in his suffering. We should embrace him, tell him it is all right, let him know that we understand." But to many other observers across the political spectrum, including a number of conservatives, Kerrey's relative lack of indignation at being accused of heinous deeds, combined with his evident inability to remember or explain a number of pivotal facts, strongly suggested that he might be guilty as charged.

Mary McGrory did more than wonder; she called for Kerrey to be put "in the dock." And she was hardly alone: with her were a great number of other commentators, including, for example, Daniel J. Goldhagen, the author of the best-selling *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, who co-wrote an op-ed article in the *Boston Globe* arguing that enough evidence existed in the public record "to suggest that [Kerrey's] unit might have committed grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions."

Nor was it only Kerrey himself who was to be put "in the dock." If he was fit to be tried, what about the ranking officials whose chain of decisions had sent him, and other men like him, into "free-fire zones" on lethal missions? On this point, a swelling chorus agreed that the higher-ups in the Pentagon and the White House were guilty, too. And so, by extension, was America itself. For Vietnam was, in the words of the Rutgers professor and far-Left "peace activist" H. Bruce Franklin, "a war against the Vietnamese people, a people and a nation that had never done anything to us." It was, added Christopher Hitchens, a "genocidal war, a war of atrocity and aggression."

A number of liberals and centrists, including some of Kerrey's closest defenders, seemed to concur with this radical indictment of the United States. But in their hands it was invoked not to underline but to mitigate the degree of his personal culpability. "For our country to blame the warrior instead of the war is among the worst, and, regrettably, most frequent mistakes we can make," wrote three of Kerrey's colleagues in the Senate in the *Washington Post*, each of them himself a veteran of the Vietnam conflict. "[T]he guilt and shame of which [Kerrey] has spoken in recent days is not his alone," chimed in Hendrick Hertzberg of the *New Yorker*. "Kerrey's shame, like his valor, is his country's." According to a headline in *Time*, the Kerrey revelations embodied "the madness of Vietnam," while to the editors of the *New York Times* the raid likewise exemplified "the madness of a war that then, as now, seemed to lack any rationale except

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the wrecking of as many lives as possible on both sides."

THE ISSUES raised by Vistica's article and the outpouring that followed it range from the most specific—the legal guilt or innocence of Bob Kerrey—to the more general questions of civilian casualties in modern war and the rightness or wrongness of American intervention in Vietnam. But let us start with Kerrey's alleged crime. Is the "laughing, literate" former Senator a "baby killer"?

Every thoughtful analyst who has examined the available evidence has come to the unsurprising conclusion that the question cannot be definitively answered. The two versions we have been given of the events are irreconcilable, and there are implausible details in each of them.

Thus, to take up just one much-discussed and uncontested fact, heavily counting against Kerrey's version is the fact that the slaughtered women and children in Thanh Phong were found clustered together in a group; this suggests not casualties sustained in the course of a firefight but an outright execution. But there are also gaping holes in the story told by Kerrey's principal accuser, Gerhard Klann. If Kerrey and his men were anxious not to alert the Vietcong to their presence in the village, massacring captives with machine-gun fire, heard for miles around in the dead of night, is simply inexplicable. Vistica himself calls this an "inconsistency," one of several he draws attention to in his reconstruction of the raid.

How to resolve such inconsistencies? One way would be to do what Mary McGrory and others have proposed and hold formal hearings or something resembling a trial. In the abstract, this would seem to have undeniable merit. As the columnist Michael Kelly put it, either Kerrey and his men "are guilty of war crimes or they have been terribly maligned and their names must be cleared." In either case, "the truth needs to out."

But whether the truth would "out" in such a judicial setting is, to say the least, unlikely. Is it really necessary to point out that the episode in question happened 32 years ago, in the dead of night, in the jungle, in the fog of a guerrilla war, in a remote village? Nor are these factors, formidable as they are, the only obstacles to discovering the truth.

Daniel J. Goldhagen, who has called for a congressional investigation "under the guidance of an independent, outside counsel with expertise in war crimes," is particularly insistent that heed be paid to the testimony of witnesses from Vietnam itself. "Disturbingly," he notes, "in many accounts and discussions of the raid," the assertions of Vietnamese have been "omitted," treated as "not worth mentioning" or "delegitimized solely because they are being made by Vietnamese." Is it really necessary to point out that today, thanks to the defeat of the American effort in Vietnam, the village in question, like the rest of the country, is under Communist control—or to specify what that means?

Painting a picture of unrelenting oppression in contemporary Vietnam, the U.S. State Department's annual report on human rights notes that the country's judicial system is the obedient servant of the ruling Communist oligarchy. "Party officials, including top leaders, instruct courts how to rule on politically important cases." The Kerrey case certainly qualifies as "politically important," and the "genocidal" nature of American intervention in Vietnam, a theme into which the Kerrey case can be poured like rice into a bowl, has been a premier feature of Hanoi's propaganda for three decades running. Under the circumstances, what pearls of mendacity are Vietnamese witnesses likely to contribute to the search for truth? To the contrary, the notion that the U.S. Congress should stage an inquiry prominently featuring Vietnamese witnesses amounts to little more than an invitation to a show trial.

A FAR more interesting and important issue than how or whether to place Bob Kerrey before a kangaroo court is whether the raid he engaged in was, in either his own or in Gerhard Klann's version, characteristic of the American way of waging war in Vietnam. Much of the commentary on the Kerrey affair assumes, as a matter of course, that it *was*—that "free-fire zones" and the purposeless killing of civilians were not just daily fare but a particular American contribution to the conflict. The truth, however, is far more complex, if not especially comforting to either hawks or doves.

There can be no gainsaying the fact that Operation Speedy Express, the military campaign of which Kerrey's raid was one small component, was a particularly ugly chapter in an ugly war. The six-month operation was designed to "scrub" Vietcong strongholds in the Mekong Delta region south of Saigon. But as Guenter Lewy notes in his authoritative and scrupulously balanced study, *America in Vietnam* (1978),* the particular methods being employed were not those of "pacification"—a strategy of securing the countryside by protecting villagers from the depredations of the Vietcong—but

* I have drawn on this indispensable volume throughout what follows.

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those of attrition, in which "the free use of air strikes, artillery, and helicopter gunships" brought about "a great deal of devastation, thousands of new refugees, and much loss of innocent life."

While the heavy firepower and the insertion of small formations of soldiers like Kerrey's unit into Vietcong strongholds did manage to tamp down enemy strength, the overall effect was to produce what one contemporaneous military report colorlessly called "a significant negative impact on the population." In other words, Operation Speedy Express was a limited success in its own narrow terms of disrupting the enemy, but in the larger contest for the loyalty of the rural South Vietnamese populace—which was or should have been the essential objective—it was a nullity at best.

In this light, the inadvertent civilian casualties incurred at Thanh Phong (if we assume, for the moment, that Kerrey is telling the truth) *were* in some respects typical of this particular theater and phase of the war; and if one judges the whole war by Operation Speedy Express, it would not be especially difficult to frame a harsh indictment of U.S. conduct in Vietnam. For what could be more senseless (and therefore immoral) than killing large numbers of the very civilians we were ostensibly fighting to protect while propelling innocent bystanders into the arms of the Vietcong?

But any such indictment of U.S. policy must be immediately qualified. Operation Speedy Express was also an extreme case, in which a number of different Pentagon pathologies came simultaneously into play. One of these was the chronically technocratic mindset both of McNamara, the Secretary of Defense, and General William C. Westmoreland, the commander of U.S. forces in Vietnam, who aimed at reaching a "crossover point" at which the Vietcong and North Vietnamese would suffer casualties greater than they could sustain. From this there sprang in turn the heavy emphasis on increasing the enemy "body count," a count with which the officer in charge of Speedy Express, Major General Julian J. Ewell, was reputed to be, as Lewy puts it, "obsessed."

A second pathology had to do with the inability of officers in the field to break away from the training and preparation they had received for fighting a conventional war against a massed enemy on the plains of Europe. Ewell believed that (in his own words) "the only way to overcome VC [Vietcong] control and terror is by brute force." This mode of operation did have the undeniable virtue of helping to husband the lives of American soldiers, hardly a trivial concern in a war that depended on ever more tenuous support from a home front where the dying could be seen in living color on TV. But it also led to a strikingly high ratio of enemy soldiers killed to weapons actually found on them—14.6 to 1 as opposed to the norm of 3 to 1 in the war as a whole. As Lewy explains, this was a revealing indicator "that many of those killed were not really combatants."

Operation Speedy Express was hardly the only instance in which the U.S. military failed to comprehend the political and psychological requirements of waging war in Vietnam. But if it was typical of what may be called the liberal phase of the war under Lyndon Johnson, it was also a strategy to which both Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger took deep exception. When Nixon took office in January 1969, he accelerated a shift away from "big unit" collisions and the undiscriminating use of firepower and toward what General Creighton Abrams, who succeeded Westmoreland as commander in the field, characterized as an effort "to provide meaningful, continuing security for the Vietnamese people in expanding areas of increasingly effective civil authority."

Although this new approach was resisted, and in part subverted, by the U.S. military machine, it did, in conjunction with far more controversial steps like the bombing of Communist strongholds in adjacent Cambodia, yield dividends on the ground. By 1971, much of the contested territory of the South had been brought under government control. Indeed, it was the very success of this campaign of "pacification" that partly prompted Hanoi to jettison its own strategy of guerrilla warfare, which was no longer paying off, and to opt instead for the direct approach of conventional invasion, a course ironically made feasible by the steady removal of American forces from the theater and the dramatic erosion of support for the war back in the U.S.

American management of the war has been subjected to intense critical scrutiny. But there has been far less interest in, let alone public discussion of, Communist behavior. And yet one highly relevant backdrop against which to view the Kerrey raid is the conduct of the Vietcong guerrilla forces under the control of Hanoi.

Throughout the entire war, these forces engaged in massive intimidation, abduction, and assassination both of South Vietnamese government officials and of ordinary civilians. When, for example, the Vietcong managed to seize control of the provincial capital of Hue in 1968, thousands of Vietnamese

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were slaughtered within weeks; as autopsies of bodies found in mass graves subsequently revealed, many of the victims had been buried alive. Some lucky survivors of the 26-day occupation of Hue had their hands cut off. At other places and times, disembowelment of exemplary victims in front of assembled villagers was the normal practice.

If such gruesome events are less familiar to Americans than images of children burned by napalm, or the My Lai massacre, that is because, as Lewy notes, they typically "took place well hidden from the eyes and cameras of journalists who had a free run in the part of South Vietnam under GVN [Government of South Vietnam] control, and whose reports on wartime atrocities therefore inevitably lacked an element of balance." Of course, even extreme Vietcong brutality cannot excuse deliberate atrocities committed by U.S. and South Vietnamese forces. But in the effort to counter Vietcong-style guerrilla tactics, the potential for sliding into a moral gray zone expanded exponentially.

THE CHARACTERISTIC methods of guerrilla warfare—blending into and becoming indistinguishable from the civilian population—"challenge the most fundamental principle of the rule of war," namely, the necessity of treating combatants differently from non-combatants. Thus states the political theorist Michael Walzer in *Just and Unjust Wars* (1977), a book in which he identifies himself on the very first page as an "activist and a partisan" of the antiwar movement. Given the circumstances in which they fight, guerrillas, Walzer continues, forfeit "the war rights of soldiers." So too, inevitably, do the civilians among whom they circulate and who willingly or unwillingly give them succor. This has special implications for regular soldiers confronting a typical guerrilla-warfare situation:

> A soldier who, once he is engaged, simply fires at every male villager between the ages of fifteen and fifty (say) is probably *justified* in doing so, as he would not be in an ordinary firefight. The innocent deaths that result from this kind of fight are the *responsibility of the guerrillas* and their civilian supporters [emphasis added].

Those words, written more than two decades ago, are of startling relevance in considering the Kerrey affair (if we once again assume, for the sake of argument, that Kerrey has been telling the truth). More frequently than not, the scenario Walzer hypothesizes closely matched the actual circumstance that greeted American soldiers on the ground. The Vietcong, embedding themselves in the South's villages, and cloaking themselves in ordinary peasant garb, actually welcomed and provoked U.S. attacks that generated civilian casualties, as these inevitably caused an outcry both in Vietnam and in the U.S. that played directly into their hands. No doubt U.S. and South Vietnamese forces were extremely shortsighted in fighting so destructively on the guerrillas' chosen turf and thus falling in with their aims, but the moral onus for the consequences rests largely with the Communists themselves.

BUT WHAT if Kerrey has been lying, and there was a deliberate massacre at Thanh Phong? Was *that* typical of the war? Some of Bob Kerrey's fellow veterans, ostensibly in a position to know, insist that massacres were indeed common. One of them is Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts, a founder back in the early 1970's of Vietnam Veterans Against the War. At a 1971 congressional hearing, Kerry told of an unofficial investigation conducted by his organization in which over "150 honorably discharged veterans testified to war crimes" committed in Southeast Asia:

> They told stories that at times they had personally raped, cut off ears, cut off heads, taped wires from portable telephones to human genitals and turned up the power, cut off limbs, blown up bodies, randomly shot at civilians, razed villages in fashion reminiscent of Genghis Khan, shot cattle and dogs for fun, poisoned foodstocks, and generally ravaged the countryside of South Vietnam in addition to the normal ravage of war.

Undeniably, serious crimes were committed against civilians by American soldiers. But as Guenter Lewy shows, the court-martial record from the period of January 1965 through March 1973 reveals that incidents of this kind were relatively rare and relatively small-scale. Over the course of eight years, 122 Army and Marine personnel were convicted of murder or manslaughter; of the total number of incidents, only a quarter "represented killings during the course of combat not justified by military necessity." The most infamous was the massacre at My Lai in 1968 in which more than 400 Vietnamese villagers were murdered.

As is the case today with Thanh Phong, some antiwar activists have long insisted that "My Lai epitomizes the Vietnam war," in the words of the Yale psychiatrist Robert Jay Lifton. But in fact, as

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Norman Podhoretz writes persuasively in *Why We Were in Vietnam* (1982), a book that also anticipates and answers many of the questions raised by the Kerrey affair, no other outrages on anything close to the scale of My Lai have ever been uncovered; "given the number of antiwar journalists reporting on Vietnam," Podhoretz adds, it is highly unlikely that "if other such atrocities had occurred, they could have been kept secret." Thus, if Thanh Phong is indeed a new addition to the list of crimes committed by Americans in Vietnam, it would darken but not significantly alter the overall picture.

In the final analysis, civilian deaths in large numbers, whether incurred deliberately or accidentally, are one of the central and inevitable features of modern war. Nor are those now loudly questioning American conduct in Vietnam always so fastidious about such casualties, as the case of Daniel J. Goldhagen illustrates. Only a few years ago, during the war in Yugoslavia, this same scholar, whose conscience is now deeply exercised by the fate of Vietnamese villagers in the Mekong Delta, was calling for a military campaign that would have caused civilian blood to flow in quantities sufficient to turn the Danube red.

NATO's strategy of merely hurling "ineffectual bombs," Goldhagen wrote then in the pages of the *New Republic*, was grossly insufficient. Instead of NATO's limited aim of forcing Slobodan Milosevic to withdraw from Kosovo, he favored the conquering of Belgrade and the "remaking of Serbia" in the same way the occupying Allies remade Germany and Japan after World War II. After subduing the Serbs and punishing their rulers, it was imperative, Goldhagen argued, that NATO reckon with the nationalist feelings of the "vast majority" of the Serbian people who needed to be compelled "to comprehend their errors and rehabilitated" through the imposition of "Enlightenment values." All this, he concluded, "would be a much smaller and less costly task, in both material and human terms, than it was in Germany and in Japan."

True, smashing little Serbia into submission would probably not have required dropping an atomic bomb on Belgrade, or even firebombing it with incendiaries. But it would certainly have required forcing an unconditional surrender on Milosevic, whose army had spent several decades preparing to fend off Soviet invasion, and the task would have been an exceptionally bloody one. Fortunately for the innocent civilians of Serbia, many more of whom would have been pulverized in Goldhagen's fantastic scenario than actually did die under NATO's hail of "ineffectual" but highly accurate bombs, they today live in a democracy that they have created by their own hands. And fortunately for us all, Daniel J. Goldhagen is today merely an academic and not a latter-day version of the whiz-kids who populated the Kennedy administration and who four decades ago, with not quite so breathtakingly uninhibited a display of hubris, brought us into Vietnam.*

A final question is raised by the idea that Vietnam was, as the *New York Times* now proclaims it, "a war that then, as now, seemed to lack any rationale except the wrecking of as many lives as possible on both sides." Today, it has indeed become a piece of conventional wisdom that the Vietnam war lacked any meaningful rationale. But that is hardly how the war looked to most people when the conflict was at its zenith. It is assuredly not how the war looked to the editors of the *New York Times*.

In 1961, as the U.S. was just beginning to wade into the fray, the words "Free World," always capitalized, still meant something to the *Times*. The paper's view then was that "Free World forces . . . still have a chance in South Vietnam, and every effort should be made to save the situation." Four

* In contrast to Goldhagen, Michael Walzer in *Just and Unjust Wars* at least has the virtue of consistency across historical time-frames. As an antiwar "activist," he condemns not only the U.S. effort to protect South Vietnam but also some of the more significant military measures taken to conquer Germany and Japan. He especially reviles as "savage" the bombing of Dresden in the spring of 1945, "in which something like 100,000 were killed," as well as previous Allied attacks on Hamburg and Berlin in the period after it had become clear that Germany would be defeated. "[T]he deliberate slaughter of innocent men and women," he writes, "cannot be justified simply because it saves the lives of other men and women."

Putting aside the fact that the figure of 100,000 dead in Dresden is a fabrication of the pseudo-historian David Irving (whom Walzer cites uncritically), the bombardment of German cities did not merely shorten the war but, by forcing Hitler to invest heavily in air defense rather than in offensive weaponry, made a major contribution to winning it. Moreover, only in retrospect can we say that Germany was heading for certain defeat at any given moment. In the heat of the struggle, there was the constant and entirely justified fear that Hitler would unveil a weapon like the A-bomb he was known to be working on, thus changing the tide of war and wreaking unimaginable destruction of human life.

True, many of the Germans who perished in the cellars of their firebombed cities were indeed innocent of any crime. But so were the many Jews and others who were rescued from annihilation by the early end of the war brought about in part by the progressive destruction of transportation and industry wrought by the bombing campaign. Walzer writes that "to kill 278,966 civilians (the number is made up) in order to avoid the deaths of an unknown but probably larger number of civilians and soldiers is surely a fantastic, godlike, frightening, and horrendous act." But Walzer's own choice—to forgo bombing and not to try to save the lives of Nazism's most desperate victims, not to mention those of so many Allied soldiers—is no less fantastic and horrendous. The world can be thankful that Walzer, too, is merely a professor and was not, during World War II, a participant in the councils of power.

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years later, when the U.S. was already in deep and heading deeper, a *Times* editorial reiterated that America had gone into Vietnam with the laudable purpose of containing the advance of Communism—"The motives are exemplary and every American can be proud of them"—while another editorial in the same year stated that "virtually all Americans understand that we must stay in South Vietnam for the near future."

By the early 1970's, however, the *Times* had begun to pedal in reverse, calling for the same "precipitate withdrawal" it had earlier denounced as the counsel of only "a few pacifists here and the North Vietnamese and Chinese Communists." Soon enough, the U.S. Congress actually followed the *Times*'s recommendation and cut off all military assistance to South Vietnam; soon enough, the U.S. departed and the North Vietnamese swept victoriously to Saigon. What followed were massive flows of refugees and "boat people," while hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese who did not manage to escape endured mental and physical torture in reeducation camps and millions more would shortly suffer in Hanoi's wars against neighboring China and Cambodia. As for the hapless Cambodians, they were to undergo full-scale genocide at the hands of the Khmer Rouge.

Today, our national newspaper of record crudely rewrites the past, even to the point of erasing its own published words from its official memory. Next to such exercises in armchair falsification, the conduct of a man like Bob Kerrey (assuming once again that he is telling the truth, as my intuition tells me he probably is) is a model of rectitude. Despite his latter-day descent into self-pity, and despite his mysteriously uncertain memory of one of the more memorable days of his life, Kerrey did go on after that night in Thanh Phong to serve heroically in combat, suffering grievous injury and winning a Congressional Medal of Honor in addition to his dubious Bronze Star. If his own rather bewildered and bewildering demeanor today reflects some of the profound ambiguities of the war, in this he is by no means alone.

In 1971, John Kerry, today Bob Kerrey's defender but back then a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy, won wide acclaim on the Left when he threw away his medals at a demonstration on the steps of the U.S. Capitol. But acclaim turned to dismay when it subsequently emerged that the medals Kerry had hurled into the air did not belong to him, but to someone else; he had kept his own collection of Purple Hearts and Bronze and Silver Stars, and displayed them proudly in his home. For this Kerry was called a hypocrite. But surely there is a deeper meaning to be extracted from his behavior on the Capitol steps. What it suggests is that in some hidden compartment of their hearts, even some who publicly repudiated the American role in Vietnam may have held a more complicated if not contrary view. In that compartment one might find an understanding that the Vietnam war, despite the irresponsibly blithe way we entered it, despite the sometimes criminal stupidity of the way we waged it, and despite the civilian casualties it entailed like the massacre at Thanh Phong, was fought against an unrelenting human evil and on behalf of a good and a just cause.

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The Critics' Club

Joseph Epstein

A POPULAR television program of the 1950's, *The Gary Moore Show*, used to close with a regular feature called "That Wonderful Year," in which members of the cast—Moore, Carol Burnett, and others—would sing popular songs from 1926, or 1948, or some other year in the past. But I have long thought that, intellectually, the 1950's themselves qualify as "Those Wonderful Years." What made them wonderful was an air of seriousness about matters of the mind that, in retrospect, seems almost impossible to credit, let alone to imagine re-creating.

A much stricter division of culture was then in place, and this division entailed firm lines separating highbrow, middlebrow, and lowbrow. An intellectual elite, though it may have felt itself outside the mainstream of American life, went about its business with an easy confidence in the worth of its mission. That mission had been defined long before by Matthew Arnold as "the disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." Even in the 1950's this presented the difficulty—new certainly since Matthew Arnold's time—of weeding out the vast quantity of cultural produce that, intellectually and artistically, made a pretense to qualifying as among the best but in fact did not come close. The recompense for this job tended to be low, like that given the poor fellow paid to wait outside the *shtetl* for the messiah, but one was never out of work.

These days, the mere mention of the word "elite" can put an immediate chill into the air, but in the mid-20th century the American intellectual elite was a democratic elite, open (as was said about careers in France under Napoleon) to talent. The leading intellectual figures of the 50's tended to be not especially well-born, in either the social or the economic sense, but rather the children of immigrants or, if native-born, of the lower-middle or middle classes. Intellectual standing in those years went to men and women who, largely through their own efforts, had gone to the trouble to make themselves highly intelligent.

The 1950's, too, was the last time that the university did not seem to dominate intellectual life as it has done almost ever since. Only a few of the writers for the leading intellectual magazines of the period—*Partisan Review* and COMMENTARY in the U.S.; *Encounter*, the *New Statesman* and the *Spectator* in England—had regular academic connections. (In England, neither George Orwell nor V.S. Pritchett had even attended a university.) Most were able to maintain themselves at editorial jobs or at work outside cultural institutions, or even, at some strain, to live off their writing. If being inside a university had its benefits—the security of tenure, the

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advertised (though usually never realized) pleasures of collegiality—being outside allowed an individual with intellectual ambitions to range widely, with all the world as his subject. A university career could never have produced (to name some disparate figures) a Mary McCarthy, a Harold Rosenberg, a Clement Greenberg, a Dwight Macdonald, a Midge Decter, an Irving Kristol, a Hilton Kramer, or a Norman Podhoretz.

IF ANY single piece of evidence were needed to prove what now seems the astonishingly high intellectual quality of the 1950's, it is *A Company of Readers*,* a selection of essays from the monthly pamphlets of a highbrow book club first known as the Readers' Subscription and then, as of 1957, the Mid-Century Book Club. These essays were written by the club's three-man editorial board: W.H. Auden, Jacques Barzun, and Lionel Trilling.

When the Readers' Subscription began in September 1951, Auden was already well-established as one of the great poets of the age, second perhaps only to T.S. Eliot in international reputation; Barzun and Trilling, though holding academic jobs at Columbia, seemed very far from the standard notion of the college professor, and neither of them bore the academic curse of specialization. Barzun, whose range was immense—he wrote a two-volume study of Berlioz and his age, and also a history of ideas titled *Marx, Darwin, Wagner*—was usually referred to as a cultural historian. Trilling, who wrote chiefly about English and American literature, was a literary critic, but one with philosophical ambitions on which he often made good. About both men there was something of the metropolitan spirit, while about Auden, a transplanted Englishman who had taken American citizenship, there was the spirit of the intellectual cosmopolitan. Had Edmund Wilson been added to the editorial board, it would have constituted the literary equivalent of an intellectual all-star team.

The idea for the Readers' Subscription, Barzun reports in his foreword to *A Company of Readers*—of the three, he is the only one still living—came from a student of Trilling's named Gilman Kraft, who later made his fortune producing the theatrical programs known as *Playbill*. Other clubs—Book-of-the-Month, the Literary Guild—had long been in business, but Kraft's idea was, as Barzun puts it, "to create an audience for books that the other clubs considered to be too far above the public taste." These included books of contemporary poetry, criticism, anthropology, and difficult novels of the kind that—as was once said of the novels of Henry James, Marcel Proust, and James Joyce—one should never read for the first time.

The launching of the Readers' Subscription was nicely timed. The Book-of-the-Month Club, which had once chosen George Santayana's *The Last Pilgrim* and Richard Wright's *Native Son* as main selections, had lately taken to supplying more middlebrow provender, with only occasional lapses in the direction of high culture—often in its introductory offers that lured every neophyte intellectual from the provinces, including me.

I joined the Book-of-the-Month Club twice: the first time to obtain the seven-volume edition of the plays and prefaces of George Bernard Shaw, the second for the two-volume, excruciatingly small-type version of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (with magnifying glass); I got out each time after fulfilling the minimum number of purchases. The late Arnaldo Momigliano, historian of the ancient world, once told me, in his heavy Piedmontese accent, that "The cheapest way to acquire a book remains to buy it." After a bit I puzzled out what he meant: if one bought a book, as opposed to being given or lent it, at least one did not have to read the damn thing. By this measure, my two brief memberships in the Book-of-the-Month Club, which resulted in books that lay on my shelves unread for decades, were a bargain.

The unspoken promise of the Readers' Subscription was to cut out not the middleman but the middlebrow. Auden, Barzun, and Trilling lent the enterprise what is sometimes called cachet, sometimes more crudely known as class. Although I never joined, I remember the many full-page ads that ran in the *New York Times Book Review* and elsewhere, especially the weightiness of the selections—they once actually offered James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*—the unsmiling earnestness of the faces of the three editors, the air of high purposiveness that surrounded the entire enterprise.

Marketing is now so much a part of culture as to seem indivisible from it, but in the 1950's, when the Readers' Subscription was started, artists, critics, and academics, by very definition, were careful to steer well clear of anything to do with the marketplace. Which is not to say that the three editors did not want as many subscribers as possible; their hope was to make an appeal to general readers of a kind that would elevate their taste. Auden even expressed a dislike for the word "highbrow," and hoped the club would turn its members into "intellectual dandies."

Still, that three such luminaries should line

* Edited by Arthur Krystal. Free Press, 320 pp., $26.00.

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themselves up with so clear a commercial undertaking—even if a somewhat missionary one—carried its own risks. Barzun reports that when the Readers' Subscription changed hands and became the Mid-Century Book Club, the new owner suggested that the editors also become part owners; but they were wary, deeming a financial interest "inappropriate to our role as judges" and concerned about wasting more time on meetings and negotiations. My guess is that their real worry, which sounds rather quaint today, was that they would be thought to have "sold out." The very term, when today everybody is eager to buy in, speaks worlds.

Neither Barzun in his foreword nor Arthur Krystal in his admirable introduction mentions how much the members of the editorial board were paid for their services. Inquiring—not to speak of just plain vulgar—minds want to know. One assumes that it was not enough to remove them from the financial wars or set them up in villas in Tuscany. Although the enterprise to which they had lent their names lasted much longer than any of them expected—just under twelve years—it was not wildly successful. Nor was it free of the inefficiencies that have always marked modern publishing: Barzun speaks of members writing to complain that their books had not arrived or that they had been sent the wrong titles. There is something mildly comical in the image of these rather Olympian figures having to respond to complaints like, "Where the hell is my *Complete Poems of Cavafy*?"

When the Readers' Subscription began, Auden, Barzun, and Trilling were only in their early forties—the first two were born in 1907, the last in 1905. Yet in their writing they commanded an authority that is immensely impressive. Among them they also nicely covered the cultural waterfront. Auden, who was something of a Francophobe, had a taste for things German; Trilling, alone among the three in having no foreign languages, was steeped in critical literature; and Barzun, who was French by birth, seemed able to write about everything, even Japan.

None of the three men operated with a critical system, although each had his predilections. Auden was serious about his own Kierkegaardian variant of Christianity; Trilling, after shucking his youthful Marxism, was a Freudian, though never in a way that seemed to obtrude in his criticism; and Barzun took to heart T.S. Eliot's dictum that intelligence was a critic's best tool. Apparently, they seldom had serious arguments over the selections; their biweekly meetings, Barzun reports, were light and easy, discussions "interwoven with jokes, puns, and parodies." In these meetings, "we behaved like friends talking over what to recommend to other friends."

Arnoldian sweetness and light did not make the editors dull boys; something playful there was about this enterprise from the outset. This is partly expressed in the subjects they chose to write about, highlighted in Krystal's selection of 45 monthly essays—of 173 they wrote over the life of the club—fifteen from each of the editors. Barzun, for example, should by rights have written about Berlioz, and Auden about Oscar Wilde, but in fact it was the other way around. Trilling, who confessed that he no longer went to the movies and rarely to the theater, wrote about both. Auden, the Englishman, wrote about such quintessentially American topics as Edmund Wilson's *Apology to the Iroquois* and William Faulkner, while Trilling wrote about Kenneth Clark's *The Nude* and Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* and Barzun took on Harold Rosenberg's *The Tradition of the New* and D.H. Lawrence. A nice unpredictability operates here, an unexpected mating of writer to subject that made for lively compositions.

The essays the editors wrote each month ranged between 1,000 and 5,000 words, with most falling somewhere in the middle. Puffery played no part. True, few selections were actually attacked, but none of the editors minded arguing with aspects of a book they were ostensibly trying to sell: the quality of a translation, the use of objectionable jargon, the thinness of central ideas. "One must say that it pays for its felicities," Barzun writes about the late style of Henry James—the club's selection that month was James's autobiography—"by being not only difficult but also often bad."

In his introduction, Arthur Krystal characterizes the three editors by the manner in which their own prose styles convey their differing degrees of comfort in the world: by his reckoning, Auden is delighted to be here, Barzun is most at ease, and Trilling goes back and forth. In my own sorting, Barzun is easily the most authoritative of the three, Auden the most casual, and Trilling the most given to qualifying. To put it differently, Trilling does his thinking on the page, Barzun has already put his thoughts in order and uses the page to set out his conclusions, and Auden wonders why a page is really required, it all seems so obvious.

All three were men in possession of wide culture—or, more precisely, in wide possession of high

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culture—and their knowledge was leavened with common sense and elevated by taste. Today the man of culture tends to pride himself on living on several planes at once, none of them excluding the others. A little good trash isn't going to violate anyone, the film critic Pauline Kael once said, in defense of junk movies. Trilling, Auden, and Barzun seem keenly aware that when the guard of culture goes down, the mediocre soon begins to pass for the profound. Early in an essay on the theater criticism of Kenneth Tynan, Trilling writes:

> [N]ine times out of ten, when I read the text of a play, I am bewildered by the process of thought through which the playwright came to conclude that he had anything to say that anyone would want to listen to. And my bewilderment turns into anxiety when I realize, as I must, that plenty of people do want to listen. The playwright, with an air of fearless dedication to the truth, gives us the intellectual, emotional, psychological, and political clichés of twenty years ago, and a quite significant part of the world responds as if he were as *farouche* and original and cogent as a new William Blake and a new Friedrich Nietzsche rolled into one.

Writing in 1961, Trilling unfortunately did not mention which playwrights he had in mind, but one assumes they must have included Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams, and Eugene O'Neill. As for the theatrical geniuses of our own day, no better gloss could be written on the plays of Tony Kushner, Edward Albee, or David Mamet. Whatever the excesses of highbrowism—its preciosity, its cultishness, its potential snobbery—it is useful in reminding all who forget that in the realm of culture, only the two-eyed should reign.

TRILLING PERHAPS never again wrote with less hesitation than he did for this book club. (He reprinted a number of his essays for the Readers' Subscription in *A Gathering of Fugitives*, 1957.) As his fame grew, his prose grew more mandarin, ponderous, and qualified, and his intellectual windup could be so elaborate that his actual pitch, disappointingly, often did not seem to have much on it.

Barzun, by contrast, provides at his best a model of the critic in action, a highbrow who is able to use the long historical view to set modern pretensions in perspective. Writing in 1954 on Virginia Woolf—well before her reputation was madly pumped up by academic feminists looking for heroines—Barzun gets her just right, using her *Diary* to make the excellent point that the modern age has chosen to make literary creation seem hopelessly difficult:

> Virginia Woolf and the moderns generally chose to find [the making of literary worlds] impossible. They take creation hard and make it a virtue to stop at pearls. Universes [such as those created by Balzac, Walter Scott, and Byron] are a fad of the past.

Of the three, it is Auden who permits himself the most personal tone. It is difficult to imagine Barzun or Trilling writing, as Auden does in connection with an anthology about drugs: "No, on the whole, I think we had better stick to wine: it tastes nicer and it has even been known to improve the conversation." But lest this make Auden seem a lightweight, he is also capable of hard and even brilliant insights, as when he distinguishes among three types of fiction: the Prose Poem, in which form and content are inseparable (Joyce's *Ulysses*, Woolf's *The Waves*, and the late fiction of Henry James); Feigned History, in which characters are placed in real settings and viewed from the inside (Tolstoy in *Anna Karenina*); and the Fairy Tale, which represents the conflict of good and evil as a larger reflection of that same conflict within each of us (Faulkner in *The Mansion*).

Auden, Barzun, and Trilling are not always persuasive. Auden, for example, unsuccessfully compares Colette with Tolstoy; Trilling overestimates Lawrence Durrell, and could not be wronger when he says that James Baldwin's public role as a spokesman for black anger did him "a great good as a novelist"; and when Barzun writes of George Bernard Shaw that "he remains the most astonishing mind in two centuries," one cannot but recall that Lenin referred to Shaw, a mindless rooter for the Soviet cause, as one of "those useful idiots." All three—Auden partly excepted—seem also to have been hooked on the bloody-minded vitalism of D.H. Lawrence in a way that is no longer quite understandable.*

These minor cavils aside, all three men attain and adhere to a very high level. While eschewing theoretical positions, and refraining from intricate analysis, they concentrate at getting to a writer's essence, discovering what gives him his charm, fascination, power. Books, plays, movies, interesting

* Then, too, infatuation with Lawrence was characteristic of that whole generation of intellectuals. "In the degree that our civilization daily comes closer to the point where perhaps only the most drastic therapy can save it," wrote Diana Trilling in 1947, "his work has an extraordinary poetic significance. It is a metaphor against doom." I myself much prefer Bertrand Russell's final judgment on Lawrence: "His descriptive powers were remarkable, but his ideas cannot be too soon forgotten."

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in themselves, also make occasions for comment on the wider culture. Political correctness simply does not arise as a question, problem, or issue in any of these essays. In the republic of letters in which Auden, Barzun, and Trilling are citizens, race, class, or gender does not enter in; for them, there are only two kinds of writer, good and bad.

Reading through these essays brings back a time when so much seemed to ride on what a small number of critics felt about literature. Books, the culture of books, reigned supreme. Over the years this supremacy has been eroded. For a period, with movies looming more important than books, it seemed that Pauline Kael would replace Edmund Wilson as the center of intellectual interest among the so-called educated classes. But then fancy food came to replace movies, and so it went.

For those of us to whom books *still* remain the best thing going, these essays of Auden, Barzun, and Trilling also remind us that critics do not exist today who can write about culture with anywhere near the same intellectual suavity and aplomb. Nor is it clear that, even if such critics did exist, the readers would be there to provide an audience. Barzun reports that the membership of the Readers' Subscription generally hovered around 35,000, rising at its height to a little more than 40,000. Today, Arthur Krystal thinks, a club devoted exclusively to serious books could not be done at all.

Perhaps not. Still, anyone who does intellectual work of any kind tends to hold out the hope of a yet untapped audience, hidden in odd corners of this vast nation. If one writes a serious book, one hopes that it will catch fire and find 50,000 readers (not so much to ask, surely, in a country of 270 million); if one edits a magazine, one lives with the tantalizing suspicion that another 20,000 or so potential readers exist who would subscribe if only they knew about it. Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*, an extremely complex book, sold hundreds of thousands of copies. Jacques Barzun's own recent work of cultural synthesis, *From Dawn to Decadence*, has been a bestseller. Are these freak happenings, or do they hold out wider possibilities?

Reading these essays somehow brought to mind another essay, "A Preface to Persius," written by Edmund Wilson in 1927, a few months after the execution for murder of the radical anarchists Sacco and Vanzetti. Wilson, dining alone, brings into an Italian restaurant in Greenwich Village an 18th-century edition of the Roman satirist Persius (34-62 C.E.) that he has just picked up in a used bookstore. In the preface to this book, the editor, an Englishman named William Drummond, weighs the strengths and weaknesses of his by no means major author. Reading Drummond's preface, and commenting at the same time on the honest quality of the food he is being served, Wilson dilates on what Persius, writing during the time of the wretched Nero, had to go through. Drummond, too, he notes, worked at a time, not long after the French Revolution, when the world must have seemed greatly shaken by political events.

A man of the Left, disturbed that the protests on behalf of Sacco and Vanzetti had gone down to defeat, Wilson feels a link with both the Latin poet and his editor. As he finishes his inexpensive but good red wine, he professes himself "warmed by this sense of continuity with the past . . . by this spirit of stubborn endurance," and concludes that "there was nothing to do save to work with the dead for allies . . . that that edifice, so many times begun, so discouragingly reduced to ruins, might yet stand as the headquarters of humanity."

"The headquarters of humanity" is a bit inflated—too much red wine, no doubt—but in paging through *A Company of Readers* one has a sharper sense of what Edmund Wilson felt. At a time of wild mental distraction, when the market has invaded culture in ways no one could have predicted, when professors of humanities are either actively promoting low taste or devaluing literature in favor of a politics goofy beyond reckoning, when daily coverage of the "arts" seems at best to mean reviews of rock music, television dramas, and oysters, there is sustenance to be derived from a sense of continuity with the writers of the past, in this case the fairly recent past, and with critical minds who called us to a much better game than most people today are even aware exists.

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OBSERVATIONS

That These Dead Shall Not Have Died in Vain

Midge Decter

WE WERE late getting to Emek Hamatzleva, the Valley of the Cross in Jerusalem where a number of the city's scouting groups meet, and the ceremony for Israel's Memorial Day was already in full swing. The scouts were seated in a semicircle on the ground; the rest of us stood behind them where we could get a view of the proceedings. As in the United States, boys and girls here join the scouts at around the age of ten and remain through their late teens, when some become scout leaders, but I could not imagine anything faintly like this being done by American scouts in honor of our Memorial Day, or even July 4th. (In Israel, the two days, Memorial and Independence, are celebrated, in Jewish fashion, one immediately after the other: first mourning, then joy.)

Toward one end of this gathering place, the older scouts and scout leaders had erected a stage and a podium, and on this stage throughout the evening were seated a choir, which now and then rose to sing, and several individuals who read poems chosen for their appropriateness to the occasion.

Israelis, I have noticed, seem to be especially drawn to the making and lighting of fires. Not long after Memorial Day there would come the holiday of Lag B'Omer, celebrated with great night-long bonfires for which children spent days and days collecting wood (and because of which the smell of wood smoke would afterward hang in the air for days). Perhaps, it occurred to me, this passion for wood fire is the result of the fact that Israelis live so heavily surrounded, both inside and out, by stone. On this night, too, fire was key to the proceedings, for suspended in various spots behind and alongside the stage the older scouts had ingeniously strung together a group of naked branches, wrapped in kerosene-soaked cloth, to form words or whole phrases, and as the program came to the point where one of these words or phrases was sung or spoken, a young man wielding a long burning torch set the appropriate group of branches on fire. It was nothing short of spectacular, these words set ablaze against the black sky—though a strong unseasonable wind now and then also sent showers of sparks flying into the audience.

It could have been the wind and smoke and sparks that caused so many eyes to blink back tears that night, but a far more likely culprit was another continuing feature of the program. This involved a large screen set up halfway between stage and audience. On it were flashed, one by one, the individual pictures of each and every member of the scouts from this area who had fallen in one or another of Israel's wars, beginning with 1948. As each picture was shown, over the loudspeaker came a voice announcing the individual's name, his place and date of birth, and the date of his death. In other words, central to this memorial program was the steady reminder that each of these young and fallen scouts had his own name, his own face (to judge from the photographs, a face still smooth with innocence), and his own personal history, and was not merely going to be included in some statis-

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tic and then forgotten, even by those of us—probably most of the people present—who had never known him or even heard of him.

AND STRANGELY, or perhaps not strangely, as I stood that night in far-off Jerusalem, I found myself haunted by thoughts not about Israel's dead but rather about a recent book that had nothing remotely to do with the subject of Israel. What kept going through my mind were images from *April 1865: the Month that Saved America** by Jay Winik, a vivid, almost tactile, account of the final bloody weeks of the American Civil War, the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, and, at long and sorrowing last, the surrender, one by one, of all the armies of the South.

There are books that a reader especially admires ("How did he do that?"), and there are books that a reader envies ("I could never in a million years have written anything like that"), and for me Winik's book was both. While not offering any new revelation, *April 1865* is at once both dense with detail and gripping—no mean feat for a subject that has already been gone over and over by so many distinguished, sometimes great, historians, biographers, autobiographers, poets, and diarists, not to speak of that ever active and learned army of Civil-War buffs, both Northern and Southern, who not only know the full history of the war but seem to know every blade of grass on every one of its battlefields.

What haunted my memory in particular as I stood there in Emek Hamatzleva were Winik's accounts of a couple of battles—bloodlettings—that took place not during the fateful April of the book's title but a year earlier, when anyone with the capacity to be the least bit dispassionate—not that there could have been many such just then—might already have realized that the South could not win and that from now on all the slaughter would be merely that, slaughter. And what slaughter: in the end, Winik tells us, over 620,000 were killed in the war, an almost unimaginably high proportion of the population of the time (20 million in the North, 9.5 million in the South). In any civil war, what adds immeasurably to the horror is the fact that troops are so often fighting men who had only yesterday been their neighbors, even in some cases their friends. In the American Civil War, the members of the opposing armies had been virtual brothers, and the bloodshed among them was on that account all the more dreadful.

The battles that came all unbidden to my mind were the ones in Virginia between Generals Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee from early May to early June 1864, in the course of a campaign that moved southward from a place aptly called Wilderness to a place called Cold Harbor just a few miles east of Richmond. Winik describes how in Wilderness—in virgin woods so thick that the soldiers could only now and then actually see the enemy—the men on both sides, shouting and firing, quickly fell into a chaos in which neither they nor their commanders were certain where they were, or who was fighting in which location. In the midst of all this, exploding shells set the forest underbrush on fire, and soon there came the stench of the burning flesh of the men who were trying to crawl forward. After two days of this, "the Union general hunched his shoulders, crawled into his tent, threw himself face down onto his cot—and wept."

A couple of days later, in Spotsylvania, where Lee's men had constructed an elaborate network of trenches, artillery emplacements, and so on, Grant, hoping to break through the middle, sent his men into what would become prolonged hand-to-hand combat: as Winik characterizes it, "some of the most frightful combat ever fought on American soil." "The results," he writes, "were ghastly":

> Union flags intermingled with Confederate flags, Northern limbs with Southern limbs. Blood ran as thick and furious as the rain, turning the muddy trench floors red. And on this muck, the dead and wounded were crushed by the next wave of fighting men, surging forward, jabbing this way and that.

From the fighting at Wilderness to that at Cold Harbor, that is, from May 5 to June 3, Grant is said to have lost 50,000 men, roughly the number of Americans killed during more than ten years in Vietnam. In the nearly a year beyond Cold Harbor that it would take for him finally to vanquish Lee, and with Lee, essentially the Confederacy, he would never again be able to send his men into battle with quite the same determined brutality that had carried him that scanty distance southward in Virginia through the month of May 1864.

Yet for those inclined to think harshly of Grant—at the time, that included not only the entire Confederacy but also many people in the Union who were outraged by the magnitude of the casualty count attributable to him—it would be well to remember that behind the Union general's will to prevail there was a will even stronger than his and even more determined to vanquish: that of Abraham Lincoln. Through four long years Lincoln's unswervable purpose had been that the Confederacy must be beaten, and the Union prevail, at all costs. After which, he believed, the South must be treated with great magnanimity and brought with brotherly embrace back into the Union. Indeed, when Lee and Joe Johnston surrendered, carrying the other Confederate generals with them, each was quite unprepared for the handsome treatment he was accorded by his formerly pitiless counterpart, Lee by Grant and Johnston by William Tecumseh Sherman.

* HarperCollins, 448 pp. $32.50.

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BY THE end of those four years, Lincoln's ambition was perhaps a mad one. How it would have fared had he himself survived to preside over the postwar settlement one cannot know. But the North could at least enjoy its victory as recompense for the losses it had taken, while the South was left with a well of bitterness that at certain moments and in certain places can be freshly tapped until this very day. In any case, Lincoln did not live, and few were the men in Washington who had had his grit to begin with or shared in his wisdom at the end.

Winik concludes his account of the blackest years in American history on a surprisingly fruity note:

> The nation. For all the changes, the nation was now a powerful, compelling, enthralling idea, a symbol of a sturdy country, an embodiment of an enduring people, an arena for the peaceful resolution of difference, the stitch in the fabric that even the Founders missed.

In fact, it would take something like another 50 or 60 years, the settlement of the whole country, the establishment of all of the continental 48 states, the introduction of a variety of new populations from abroad, and the beginning of the long, slow industrialization of the South before it could truly be said that the Founders' fabric had withstood the test.

But I do not mean to cavil. The main achievement of Winik's book is the way it succeeds in so vividly reminding us that in the end the fate of this society—and no doubt of every democratic society—must sooner or later hang on the ability of brave men to call on others to be as brave as they. In the case of the South this was no simple thing. The South's men were brave, certainly as brave as Grant's and Sherman's, but they came from, and were fighting for, a deeply flawed society. For all their courage, somewhere in their being they had to have been affected by an impediment beyond the admittedly critical fact that the South was an agrarian society fighting against an industrialized one. True, they were fighting for their very homes, while the Yankees were fighting for an abstraction called the Union. But they had to have been touched by the institution of slavery in the way that Thomas Jefferson had been touched by it when he said, "I tremble for my country when I consider that God is just."

Still, the men on both sides carried on bravely, as Winik describes their doing at Wilderness and Spotsylvania and Cold Harbor, stepping over their comrades' and enemies' burned and blood-soaked corpses in order to advance, or at least to resist being pushed back. To this day, and despite the thousands of pages devoted to such battles by historians, the ghastliness of those days in America's final coming-into-being does not fade.

BUT THAT war also happened long ago, and it bears no relation to the kind of sorrow that was being invoked at the Memorial Day ceremony in Jerusalem. Why, in the face of all the terrors that have since befallen the world, and particularly the Jews, should I have been reminded of it? I think it was those pictures being flashed on the screen.

There are, to be sure, Civil War memorials of some kind standing in parks or greens in virtually every city, town, and village in the Eastern and Central United States, North and South. These are usually monuments with plaques designating the regiment, or regiments, to which the young men from that town or city were attached. In certain private clubs and colleges there are also collections of plaques memorializing members or students who fell in the war. But monuments and brass plaques are inevitably abstractions; pictures of faces say and do something else.

In the United States, the closest we come to evoking the particular sense of war that was in the air that night at Emek Hamatzleva is at the Vietnam memorial in Washington, the low black wall on which is engraved the name of every soldier who fell in that godforsaken and ultimately useless conflict. The memorial was designed to be a kind of dark and forbidding abstraction—a symbol of the country's putative attitude to Vietnam—but the thousands upon thousands of people who visit it, placing hands or kisses on individual names and leaving notes and flowers, have completely overcome the original intention of both the design and the committee of authorities who accepted it. They have made it private.

But names, too, are not photographs. I do not know how many soldiers have fallen in the combined wars of Israel and their aftermaths; proportionally speaking, the number, high as it must be, surely does not compare with the losses of the Civil War. But to memorialize them as the scouts did that night—reminding everyone that but for an accident of history, any of them could have been one's own brother or child—is also to send a defiant message about Jewish fate: unlike in previous times, this time, in this place, no one is going to go nameless or faceless to his death. Sending such a message was almost certainly not the scouts' conscious intention that night; even the oldest of them were too young to harbor thoughts sparked by long-term historical memories. Conscious or not, however, for me (and no doubt for others), the pledge in the night air was inescapable.

WHETHER THIS pledge is a source of strength or a weakness is something I do not know. Thinking about Lincoln and Grant and Lee, I suspect that an impulse like the one I have described can sometimes, if not indeed always, interfere with what may need to be done.

Many years ago, almost at the

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end of the Yom Kippur War in October 1973, when the Israelis were still occupying a piece of Egypt and Henry Kissinger was pressing them to release the entrapped Egyptian Third Army, I was taken on a tour down through the Sinai and across the Suez Canal on a pontoon bridge to Israel-occupied Egypt. My host and guide was the Israeli author, sometime diplomat, and soon to become beloved friend Hanoch Bartov. All through the Sinai we saw dead tanks lying in the sand like so many giant squashed insects, and at one moment we watched in horror as an Israeli fighter plane high above us was hit and began its spiral descent to earth, landing we could not tell where.

In Egypt we drove around for a while and came on an Israeli encampment. The soldiers there were identified by Hanoch as "Shmuelik's boys," the Shmuel in question being their commanding officer. They were all young, wearing the sloppy uniforms that are—or anyway used to be—the pride of the Israeli army, and they clearly had nothing to do but sit around waiting. They had just made some coffee and offered it to us. Hanoch asked them, "Are you anxious to get home?" They answered that they were content to remain in Egypt for as long as they were needed. As we made our way back over the pontoon bridge, I knew that I would never set foot in Egypt again and was sad, but I also wondered if Israeli troops would ever be required to turn up there again.

I said to Hanoch, thinking of the recent ugly conduct of the so-called radical young in America's elite universities, "You certainly know how to raise wonderful boys."

"Yes," said Hanoch, "and we certainly know how to kill them."

I have not in more than 25 years forgotten this conversation, because I wanted to remonstrate with him and yet, secure American that I was, I dared not. I wanted to say, "That way leads to thoughts of peace instead of thoughts of invincible power, which are the thoughts Israel needs to concentrate on right now. To hold yourselves rather than your enemies responsible for the deaths of your boys will make it increasingly difficult for you to do what will need to be done."

I DID not, of course, know the half of it then: did not know that fantasies of peace would one day psychologically disarm many Israelis to the point where they could actually contemplate bartering away their brothers in order to placate their enemies. How Abraham Lincoln, determined (and much vilified) savior of a strong and united country, would have frowned upon them.

Around the time of the Yom Kippur War, Americans, too, began to beguile themselves afresh with the signing of treaties and agreements to insure that they could be secure without keeping themselves prepared for trouble. But Americans live with two great oceans on their eastern and western borders, and with Canada to the north and Mexico to the south; they might perhaps be forgiven a little (but not much) for imagining that paper could protect them from the unpleasant duty of having to remain militarily strong.

Not that the Israelis have failed to keep themselves strong; nor have they gone very far to keep the younger brothers and sons of "Shmuelik's boys" (one of them my own grandson) out of harm's way. But only recently they had to step back, or rather were pushed back, from the brink of a truly dangerous delusion: that an understanding could be reached with their enemy by taking upon themselves the full weight of guilt for the conflict between them. For as we know, it is the smell of blood that truly rouses the tiger.

But no such delusion was to be felt among the scouts that night. They were offering solemn homage to those who had died, and there was not a single hint of the idea that they might have died in vain or for a less than justified cause. True, this was the observance of a solemn annual holiday; tomorrow, Independence Day, there would be picnics and fireworks. But something more than routine piety seemed to me on display that night.

Nor, in this, did the scouts seem in any way unique. Something had happened to Jerusalem since my last visit there less than two years earlier. Never had I seen so many flags flying: from cars, from the city's ubiquitous apartment terraces, down the sides of buildings. Those flags seemed to carry an air not so much of celebration as of sobriety. More than anything else, they appeared to signify a bursting of the bubble of illusion, a return to mean reality.

No one knows what will be the fate of the boys and girls gathered in Emek Hamatzleva that night. Their country is now in a cold, cold war, one for which not even the greatest generals in history—not even Ulysses S. Grant himself—have ever devised a successful counter-strategy. Moreover, the world of the safe and comfortable, the world that Lincoln and Grant with so much bloodshed and cruel determination helped bring into being, is growing dangerously weary of their troubles. May they never, even 136 years from now, need someone with the eye and ear of a Jay Winik to remind their descendants of the terrible things they were once obliged to do to save their people.

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Music

Bruno Walter's Way

Terry Teachout

For classical musicians, few things are so uncertain as the prospect of posthumous fame. Some celebrated performers of the comparatively recent past, like the conductor Arturo Toscanini, are still remembered widely and vividly, while others, like the violinist Mischa Elman, are largely forgotten save by connoisseurs. The reasons why posterity may favor one artist over another are numerous, but in the 20th century three seemed to be of special importance. A musician was far more likely to be remembered if he had stayed active into his eighties, had made numerous recordings of large-scale, standard-repertoire works, and had spent a significant part of his career (preferably the last part) in the United States.

The conductor Bruno Walter fulfilled all three requirements to perfection. Although he achieved prominence early on, eventually becoming artistic director of the Vienna Staatsoper in 1936, he was only one of many gifted Austro-German conductors who helped to shape European musical life between the wars; had he not been forced to flee Europe after the Nazi takeover of Austria in 1938, he might be no better remembered than such now-obscure contemporaries as Clemens Krauss or Franz Schalk. Instead, in 1939 he moved to Hollywood and promptly emerged as a major force in American classical music.

Among other things, Walter would be one of the Metropolitan Opera's most prominent guest conductors and a regular guest conductor of the New York Philharmonic, where he would also serve for two years as "artistic adviser"—in fact, the orchestra's music director, though he declined the official title. By the time of his death in 1962, he had recorded and re-recorded virtually the whole of his repertoire, much of it in stereo. As a result, he is ranked today with Toscanini, Sir Thomas Beecham, Wilhelm Furtwängler, Serge Koussevitzky, and Leopold Stokowski among the best-known conductors who first came to prominence in the prewar era.

But outside of vaguely worded tributes emphasizing his kindness and generosity—qualities not often noted in famous conductors—surprisingly little of interest has been written about Walter. Except for his own books, the autobiographical *Theme and Variations* (1946) and *Of Music and Music-Making* (1957, trans. 1961), there was no full-length biography until 1999, when an Italian-language study of his life and work appeared. Now there is *Bruno Walter: A World Elsewhere*, by Erik Ryding and Rebecca Pechefsky, the first such book, incredibly, to appear in English.[1]

For a subject who was born six weeks before the premiere of Brahms' First Symphony, it is very late in the day for a comprehensive treatment. No one who knew Walter well in his youth or middle age is now alive, and even those musicians who worked with him in the 1950's are few and far between. In addition, he kept no diary, and his 7,000-odd surviving letters, while interesting, tend with some exceptions to be guarded and opaque when it comes to personal matters. As a result, Ryding and Pechefsky have had to rely on contemporary

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[1] Yale University Press, 487 pp., $35.00.

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newspaper and magazine pieces—they claim to have examined some 20,000 reviews of Walter performances—augmented by 60 face-to-face interviews.

Given all this, it is perhaps inevitable that *Bruno Walter: A World Elsewhere* should itself be a bit opaque, at least with respect to Walter's private life. Moreover, readers not already familiar with Viennese cultural history are likely to miss a sufficient context for the events described here. Yet for all its obvious inadequacies, this soberly written biography, when supplemented by Walter's recordings—as well as the films and tape recordings of his rehearsals that were made late in his life—does help bring alive a long-lost style of music-making of which Bruno Walter is a shining exemplar.[2]

In 1946, a half-century after the fact, Walter would recall his first visit as a young man to the city with which he is most closely identified. "I felt that I belonged in Vienna; that I had not found it, but had refound it," he wrote. "Spiritually, I was a Viennese." Be that as it may, he was born in Germany in 1867—and the actual last name of the conductor who would spend so much of his career leading the notoriously anti-Semitic Vienna Philharmonic was not Walter but Schlesinger.

Bruno Schlesinger was the second of three children of a Berlin bookkeeper and a music-loving, conservatory-trained housewife who began giving him daily piano lessons when he was five years old. "Every inch of this boy is music," said the teacher who admitted him to the Stern Conservatory three years later. He began composing at nine, appeared as soloist with the Berlin Philharmonic at twelve, and resolved shortly thereafter to become a conductor.

Like most European conductors, Schlesinger began his career as an opera coach, joining the staff of the Cologne Stadttheater in 1893. He conducted in public for the first time just seven months later; not long after that, he moved to Hamburg where he began working with the composer-conductor Gustav Mahler, already acknowledged as one of Europe's leading interpreters of opera. The two men became close, and Mahler's new protégé knew he had found his model at last:

> Never had I encountered so intense a human being [as Mahler]; never had I dreamed that a brief, cogent word, a single compelling gesture, backed by absolute clarity of mind and intention, could fill other people with anxious terror and compel them to blind obedience.

As a direct result of Mahler's patronage, the Breslau Stadttheater, a regional opera house located in what is now Poland, offered Schlesinger the post of second conductor. But a condition was attached: there were so many Schlesingers in Breslau, the company's director explained, that the promising young coach would have to change his name. Whether he was reluctant to hire someone with so obviously Jewish a surname is not known, but whatever his reasons, Bruno Schlesinger became Bruno Walter. The transformation was completed when Walter converted to Christianity two years later in order to become chief conductor of the Riga Opera. (At the time, the Latvian company was subject to Czarist Russia's strict anti-Semitic code.)

Walter was not the only Jewish musician of his era to become a Christian. Mahler himself did so, as did his other great protégé, Otto Klemperer. Nor were these particular conversions undertaken purely, or perhaps even primarily, for professional reasons: by most accounts, all three men took their new religion seriously. Unlike Mahler and Klemperer, though, Walter seems to have turned his back on Judaism permanently, so much so that in later years he was unwilling to talk with a close colleague about the well-known fact that Mahler had incorporated elements of Jewish popular music into his symphonies. Some Jewish members of the New York Philharmonic were even heard to complain about the emotionalism with which Walter would speak of the crucifixion of Jesus while rehearsing Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*.

Ryding and Pechefsky supply no details concerning Walter's religious practices after his conversion, nor have they anything to say about the extent to which the Schlesinger family had adhered to Jewish ritual observances.[3] But in a more general sense, Walter's religious beliefs permeated his professional life. He constantly spoke of music as a "moral force," capable of ennobling mortals and bringing them closer to God. For him, Mozart's last three symphonies were an "intellectual, spiritual, and musical confession," while the music of Anton Bruckner was "a bridge to transcendental regions; only those longing for higher spheres will respond to the apostolic calls sounding forth from his work."

Walter joined Mahler in Vienna in 1901. There the older conductor had taken charge of the Hofoper (now the Staatsoper), then as now one of the world's leading houses. Vienna was also a center of the international cultural ferment out of which emerged the modern movement in art. Mahler's own symphonies, like the sexually charged

[2] Currently available CD versions of some of Walter's best recordings are listed in the selected discography at the end of this piece. Also of interest is *Bruno Walter: The Maestro, the Man* (VAI Video 69407), an hour-long Canadian TV documentary combining film footage shot at a 1958 rehearsal of the Brahms Second Symphony with an interview of Walter conducted by the music critic Albert Goldberg.

[3] It is not even known to which Christian denomination Walter converted (though he was buried in a Roman Catholic cemetery). Late in life, he became an adherent of anthroposophy, a syncretic quasi-religion with New Age-like features.

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plays of Arthur Schnitzler, the elaborately expressionistic paintings of Gustav Klimt, and the psychological theories of Sigmund Freud, were important and influential products of the German-speaking wing of that movement.

Not surprisingly, Walter was afraid of being overshadowed by his larger-than-life patron. His soft-spoken personality made him incapable of dominating an orchestra with Mahler-like terror tactics. Instead, he opted for "psychological methods appropriate to and in conformity with my nature." In the event, his firm yet good-humored rehearsal techniques proved as effective as Mahler's willingness to embarrass individual musicians in order to get the results he wanted. Unlike Mahler, Walter was a teacher, not a tyrant, and would remain so throughout his career.

Walter came to be recognized as a major artist in his own right after Mahler's death in 1911. Though he conducted all over Europe, Vienna served as his home base. Between 1934 and 1938, he recorded extensively with the Vienna Philharmonic (which also plays in the pit of the Staatsoper), and these recordings suggest something of the extent to which music-making was being changed by the invention of the phonograph and the resulting "internationalization" of classical performance style.[4] The orchestra's idiosyncratic sound— dark and "woodsy" in color, mellow rather than brilliant—is still immediately identifiable on these recordings. So, too, is Walter's rhythmic flexibility: he typically slows down for the "lyrical" second subjects of sonata-allegro movements, underlining other transitional points with additional fluctuations in tempo, many of them spontaneous. "I myself do not know why at one time I take a tempo faster, another time slower; why my expression may change from one performance to another; and so on," he once said. "I do not approach music with reason."

Such flexibility, common enough in classical recordings of the 20's and 30's, was more than usually pronounced in Walter's case (as it is said to have been in Mahler's). A particularly memorable example is the recording of the Mozart D-Minor Piano Concerto that he made with the Philharmonic in 1937. It is among the first recorded Mozart concertos to have been led from the keyboard, and Walter proves to be a highly accomplished pianist; nevertheless, the most memorable aspect of his interpretation is its rhythmic freedom. As Ryding and Pechefsky describe it:

> In this performance the Vienna Philharmonic follows Walter's articulation, phrasing, and rubato with breathtaking closeness. . . . When he slows slightly for the second theme [of the first movement], the orchestra follows him exactly.

A less sympathetic description of Walter's prewar style came from Arturo Toscanini, one of the first modern conductors to maintain constant tempos throughout a symphonic movement. Toscanini is supposed to have said, "When Walter comes to something beautiful, he melts." For listeners accustomed to later, more direct performance styles, this "melting" can indeed be disconcerting.

After the war, significantly, Walter would opt for more consistent tempos. But the warm lyricism of his earlier performances with the Vienna Philharmonic would remain constant. Time and again in his recorded rehearsals from the 50's, he can be heard urging his instrumentalists to "sing"—that is, to play with a vibrantly expressive tone and to sculpt their phrases in the shapely manner of an opera singer. To this end, he tended to smooth over musical contrasts, softening sharp staccatos and dynamic extremes; where a non-German conductor like Toscanini was apt to be taut and intense, even aggressive, Walter was more likely to be relaxed and spacious.

Though Walter was long regarded as the most "authentic" interpreter of Mahler's music—he conducted the premieres of the Ninth Symphony and the symphonic song-cycle *Das Lied von der Erde*—some listeners thought his performances over-sentimental. Asked what he thought of Walter's renditions of Mahler, Otto Klemperer quipped, "Too Jewish for me." This characteristic remark points to the very different ways in which Mahler's two great disciples, both of them Jewish, performed his music: the one, Klemperer, wryly and even sardonically, the other, Walter, bringing out the nostalgia and pathos.[5]

WALTER'S LYRICISM was decidedly to the taste of Viennese audiences, as was his strong preference for the Austro-German classics (though he also performed a good deal more modern music—all of it tonal—than is generally realized).

But one increasingly powerful segment of the public had never accepted Walter as a legitimate spokesman for the Austro-German tradition. Almost from the outset of his conducting career, he was the subject of virulent attacks in the anti-Semitic press of Germany and Austria, whose writers invariably made a point of the fact that he had changed his name. When Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933, he was forced to stop conducting in the Third Reich.

Walter responded by strengthening still further his ties with Vienna, and acclaim for his performances continued to grow. But Vienna was itself infected with the anti-Semitic virus, and not even its most beloved conductor could escape the resulting plague. In March 1938,

[4] For a discussion of this phenomenon, see my article, "What Killed Classical Recording?," in the May COMMENTARY.

[5] Oddly, Klemperer's quip is omitted from *Bruno Walter: A World Elsewhere*, though it is well-known and has been authenticated.

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just two months after Walter had made the first recording of Mahler's Ninth Symphony with the Vienna Philharmonic, Hitler was marching in triumph through the streets of the city. The Philharmonic fired all of its Jewish musicians, and Walter and his family ran for their lives. "If you think of the most beautiful woman, whose beauty has been destroyed by smallpox or a more terrible disease and now she wanders about like a caricature of herself, resembling herself but giving horror at the same time—this is the fate of Austria and Vienna in particular," he wrote to a friend.

A year later, he moved to the United States, where he had first conducted in 1923. American musical life had long been dominated by German-trained composers and performers, but by 1939 the conductors of virtually every major orchestra in the U.S. were non-Germans: Toscanini at the NBC Symphony, Stokowski at the Philadelphia Orchestra, Serge Koussevitzky at the Boston Symphony, John Barbirolli at the New York Philharmonic. As a result, Walter stood out in high relief, and he soon became a fixture on the American musical scene.

Almost at once, he began recording for the Columbia label, first with the New York Philharmonic and then with specially organized pickup ensembles, known collectively as "the Columbia Symphony Orchestra," whom he taught to play in something not unlike the Viennese manner. After the war, he resumed his European career on a smaller scale, but even though his willingness to work with the Vienna Philharmonic at the 1947 Edinburgh Festival helped bring about that disgraced orchestra's "de-Nazification," it was in the United States that he performed most often for the remainder of his life.

In 1957, Walter suffered a heart attack and cut back sharply on his public appearances. By then, stereo recording had been introduced, so Columbia put together a Los Angeles-based version of the Columbia Symphony Orchestra, making it possible for him to re-record his repertoire (including complete cycles of the Beethoven and Brahms symphonies) without traveling far from his California home. It is through these frequently reissued performances, most of which are more rhythmically straightforward than his prewar recordings with the Vienna Philharmonic, that Walter's conducting is known to the majority of present-day listeners.

Walter gave his last public performance in December 1960 and made his final recordings three months later. His failing heart gave him no choice but to retire. He died on February 17, 1962; in breaking the news to a New York Philharmonic audience that evening, Leonard Bernstein called him "one of the saints of music—a man all kindness and warmth, goodness, and devotion."

To CALL Bruno Walter a saint, of music or of anything else, is to overstate the case. Like all successful conductors, he was ambitious and capable of ruthlessly self-interested behavior; when it came to musical matters, his genial manner on the podium masked an iron will. "He was just as much an autocrat in his gentle way as Toscanini was in an explosive way," the violinist Isaac Stern has astutely remarked. Nor is saintly the word for his personal life: married and the father of two children, he became romantically involved with at least one of his singers, the soprano Delia Reinhardt, and it appears likely that he had similar affairs at other times in his life.

But Walter was certainly no more hypocritical than most artists. Indeed, perhaps more than any other great musician of the 20th century, he believed in the ethical power of music—a conviction to which he hewed even after the Europe of his youth was put to the torch by a Wagner-loving madman who believed no less passionately in music's moral force, which he sought to bend to his own perverted ends.

Fashions in musical interpretation have changed radically over the past few decades, and it is possible that Walter's soft-edged approach to Mozart and Beethoven will never again be in vogue, or at least not soon. But many of his recordings have remained in print almost continuously since his death, and one doubts that their enduring popularity is accidental. In our age of standardized interpretation, they offer a precious glimpse of the lost world of *gemütlichkeit* and grace that Hitler murdered, and it is not hard to hear in their yearning, idealistic lyricism something of what Walter meant when he wrote, apropos of Mahler: "Music is no daytime art; it does not yield its secret roots or its ultimate depths to the unshadowed soul."

It is no coincidence that even now, Walter is best remembered for his performances of the music of Gustav Mahler. To be sure, Otto Klemperer had a point—there are other ways than Walter's to play Mahler, some of which may well bring out more of his emotional complexity—but few will deny that Walter's way is profoundly moving, and at its not-infrequent best it is capable of silencing all criticism. To hear him conduct the hushed farewell to life at the end of *Das Lied von der Erde*, with the strings of the Vienna Philharmonic playing as softly as the lightest of spring breezes, is to be reminded of his own eloquent words: "I feel, more deeply than ever before, music as a connection to the divine."

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Walter on CD: A Select Discography

MOST OF Bruno Walter's commercial recordings have been transferred to CD. Here are ten of the most representative:

1935: The only extended operatic excerpt Walter recorded in the studio was the first act of Wagner's *Die Walküre*, featuring the soprano Lotte Lehmann, the tenor Lauritz Melchior, and the Vienna Philharmonic. Matchlessly sung and played, this famous performance throbs with passion (EMI CDH 7 61020 2).*

1936: Perhaps the most frankly "Viennese" of Walter's many recordings with the Vienna Philharmonic is that of Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony, a work he liked to program in tandem with *Das Lied von der Erde* (Pearl GEMM CD 9445).*

1937: The Walter-Vienna Philharmonic recording of Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 20 in D Minor, K. 466, is an indispensable document of pre-modern Mozart style (Pearl GEMM CD 9940).*

1938: Walter and the Philharmonic performed Mahler's Ninth Symphony on January 16, 1938—their last concert prior to the *Anschluss* and the last time the orchestra played the music of Mahler until after the war. The performance was recorded for commercial release, and despite various technical imperfections, it remains extraordinarily compelling (EMI CDH 7 63029 2).

1945: Walter's only studio performance of a work by an American composer was the premiere recording with the New York Philharmonic of Samuel Barber's Symphony No. 1 in One Movement, Op. 9. This fine performance, powerful and fully comprehending, is included on a CD of 78-era "creator recordings" of early works by Barber, including Toscanini's interpretation of the *Adagio for Strings* (Pearl GEM 0049).

1945: "My dearest Alma," Walter wrote to Alma Mahler, the composer's wife, "I recorded the Fourth [Symphony] with the New York Philharmonic . . . and believe it will turn out well. I have been trying for years and years to record Mahler's symphonies, so that there is a point of reference for the next generation of young conductors." It did turn out well, and it did provide a point of reference. For many collectors, this beautifully played, utterly sincere version of Mahler's most popular symphony is *the* Walter recording—the one that best conveys his special quality (Sony Classical SMK 64450).

1952: Walter did three commercial recordings of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, of which the second, with the tenor Julius Patzak, the contralto Kathleen Ferrier, and the Vienna Philharmonic, is generally regarded as the best. Ferrier was dying of cancer when this performance was taped in Vienna's Musikvereinsaal, and her singing of the concluding *Abschied* is harrowing in its contained intensity (Decca 289 466 576-2DM).

1958: Walter also recorded Beethoven's "Pastoral" Symphony three times; the last of these performances, with the Columbia Symphony Orchestra, is a widely circulated and greatly loved example of his old-age style at its most engaging (Sony Classical SMK 64462).

1959: Similarly affecting is the Columbia Symphony version of Bruckner's Ninth Symphony, a work particularly well suited to Walter's Viennese lyricism (Sony Classical SMK 64483).

1961: Walter recorded Dvorák's Symphony No. 8 in G Major, Op. 88, during his final sessions with the Columbia Symphony, making the most of the episodic, loosely structured second movement. It is hard to believe that this glowing interpretation is the work of an eighty-three-year-old man (Sony Classical SMK 64484).

Note: CD's marked with an asterisk can be ordered from amazon.com's English branch, www.amazon.co.uk. All others can be purchased on line by viewing this article on COMMENTARY's website:
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Books in Review

Dismal Scientist

Fuzzy Math:
The Essential Guide to the
Bush Tax Plan
by Paul Krugman
Norton. 128 pp. $17.00

Reviewed by
Tod Lindberg

Paul Krugman is an economist at Princeton University and a twice-weekly op-ed columnist for the *New York Times*. The two occupations would seem to be conjoined in *Fuzzy Math*, a slim but energetic polemic against the tax-cut proposal that George W. Bush made the centerpiece of his 2000 presidential campaign.

The timing of Krugman's book turned out to be inauspicious: *Fuzzy Math* had barely made its way to bookstores before Congress reached final agreement in late May on a major tax cut only slightly modified from what Bush had proposed. Krugman's "Essential Guide to the Bush Tax Plan" is thus somewhat less essential than it might have been. But in any case, the illumination it casts on the debate over the tax cut is mostly of the inadvertent kind.

"Fuzzy math" is the term Bush threw at Al Gore on the campaign trail whenever Gore criticized Bush's plan as a tax cut for the rich. To Krugman, the term better applies to the Bush team's own calculations of the plan's costs, its likely effects, and its principal beneficiaries. His 30,000 words or so give no quarter. In his view, the plan was based on dubious if not recklessly rosy economic assumptions, was duplicitous in its budgeting, would squander money urgently needed for more pressing problems, and was wildly skewed in favor of the richest of rich Americans, with 45 percent of its total accruing to the top 1 percent of income earners. Worse, "the arguments made for the tax cuts [were] startling in their intellectual dishonesty." Krugman, in fact, "can't think of any previous administration that . . . tried to sell its economic plans on such false pretenses."

Krugman attributes the origin of the Bush plan to the interplay of two main political considerations. First, as a candidate, Bush needed to establish his bona fides with the Reagan loyalists of the GOP, a camp the elder Bush had alienated in 1990 by breaking his "no new taxes" pledge; and Bush also needed inoculation against the challenge posed by the flat-tax advocacy of his fellow presidential candidate Steve Forbes. Second, a tax cut would serve conservative ends by depriving government of money that might be spent "to finance new programs, or even to maintain old ones."

The Bush plan also had, in Krugman's telling, two independent (indeed, contradictory) economic pretexts. Bush and his aides justified it as a stimulus to demand—putting more money in consumers' pockets, thus addressing the sluggishness in the economy. And the Bush camp also believed (but did not often argue publicly) in the supply-side view, according to which cutting taxes would lead to higher econom-

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ic growth in the long run. As to the first, Krugman, while not ruling out tax cuts as stimulus measures in all cases, believes that the Federal Reserve, through cuts in interest rates, is the first line of defense against slowing growth. And as to the second, although granting that "the supply side is important and . . . taxes reduce the incentives to be economically productive," Krugman finds no *practical* evidence that economic growth, including the growth of the Reagan 80's, can be traced to tax cuts.

From its flawed premises, the Bush plan proceeded in Krugman's account to questionable assumptions about government budgeting. For one thing, it took little heed of the massive unfunded liability the government will face when the generation of the Baby Boom retires. (In his book's most interesting pages, Krugman dubs ours "the retirement state": "To caricature things a bit, but in a way that captures the essence, the federal government has become a large retirement program that does some military stuff and a bit of humanitarian stuff on the side.")

For another thing, the Bush plan's ten-year projections assumed no changes in government policy or in levels of government spending other than those from inflation. In all, Krugman figures that $4 trillion is a more realistic projection of the available surplus than the Congressional Budget Office's $5.6 trillion—and of that, $2.9 trillion will be coming from taxes on Social Security and Medicare and will therefore be off-limits.

So, for no good reason, Bush was promoting a tax cut whose true cost was understated and whose main beneficiaries would be the very wealthiest Americans. About both *these* facts, and more, the Bush campaign and then the Bush administration were nothing short of duplicitous, doing everything they could to "suppress . . . all the information that would make it easy to see what was really going on," and painting a picture of the shape and the substance of the tax cut that was false in every essential.

In place of the Bush tax cut, Krugman himself would have preferred no tax cut, or a one-time rebate followed by an immediate reduction in the bottom rate from 15 to 10 percent. Instead, what landed on the president's desk was, to judge not by *Fuzzy Math* but by one of Krugman's more recent *New York Times* columns, even worse than the original plan: "financial fakery" based on a "disinformation campaign unprecedented in the history of U.S. economic policy"; "fiscal chicanery"; "fraud"; a "scam"; "smirking contempt . . . for the public's intelligence"; "white-collar crime"; an "abomination"; and, again, "fraud."

IN HIS introduction to *Fuzzy Math*, Krugman reassures us that the book "is not a diatribe." That is true, at least if the standard of comparison is the column I have just quoted. But if not a diatribe, *Fuzzy Math* is a relentless case against. One might call it the partisan case against, but that actually does a disservice to the twelve Democrats in the Senate who voted for the final plan. Let us instead call it the case against of the *ne plus ultra* partisans.

This is hardly to say that there is no other case to be made against the Bush plan, only that Krugman, claiming the disinterested mantle of the economist, makes the same case as any number of congressmen and staffers from the left wing of the Democratic party. Nor is it to belittle his skills as either a writer or a polemicist; they are superb. With the forum he has, he finds himself in a position not only to spout the talking points of the party's left wing, but also to help formulate the talking points of the party's left wing.

In *Fuzzy Math*, however, there is very little analysis properly so-called—that is, analysis unsubordinated to Krugman's partisan interests (which he does not recognize as partisan). Thus, Krugman berates the Bush Treasury Department for switching the format in which it described the distribution of tax cuts by income group. He does this without so much as a nod to the possibility that the old way of calculating the distribution—the way it was done during the Clinton administration, for example—might serve the partisan aims of those seeking to *thwart* reductions in top tax rates. Instead, Krugman grants the old method a transpolitical, indeed canonical, legitimacy, painting only the change from it as partisan, political, and illegitimate. What is this if not simple partisanship?

Similarly, he writes about the budget gimmickry in the enactment of the tax cut as if budget gimmickry were another invention of the Bush administration and its henchmen in the Republican Congress. In fact, it is one of the oldest stories in Washington. Analytically speaking, it is simplistic in the extreme to set oneself to decrying the unlovely budgeting rules of Washington, not least because they do actually constitute the way budgeting is done. If they have biases, and they do, they are the biases everybody in Washington lives and works with, Democrats and Republicans alike.

Next, there are those "unprecedented" and "deliberate misstatements and suppression of facts" ever since the Bush team got to town. Two possibilities present themselves here. Either Krugman never heard Gene Sperling, President Clinton's key White House economic adviser, attributing nearly every widget produced in America from 1993 to 2001 to the sagacious policies of the Clinton administration; or, worse, he did hear Sperling and somehow did not recognize the partisan character of the claims Sperling was making. (I do not mean to cast aspersion on Sperling; Presidents are right to expect their advisers to make the best partisan case they can.)

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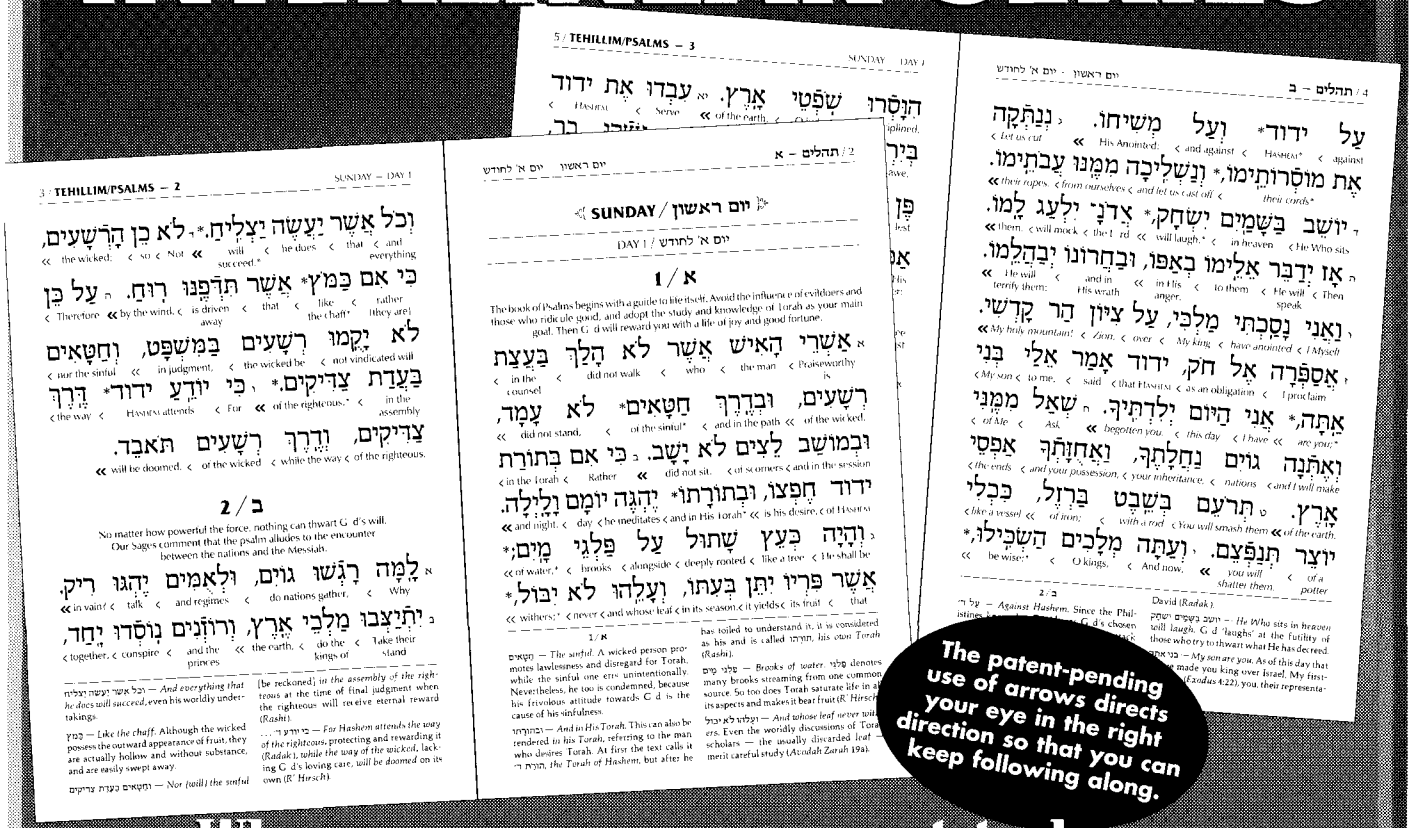
3 / TEHILLIM/PSALMS – 2
SUNDAY – DAY 1
וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה יַצְלִיחַ.* לֹא כֵן הָרְשָׁעִים,
כִּי אִם כַּמֹּץ* אֲשֶׁר תִּדְּפֶנּוּ רוּחַ. על כֵּן
לֹא יָקֻמוּ רְשָׁעִים בַּמִּשְׁפָּט, וְחַטָּאִים
בַּעֲדַת צַדִּיקִים.* כִּי יוֹדֵעַ יְדוֹד* דֶּרֶךְ
צַדִּיקִים, וְדֶרֶךְ רְשָׁעִים תֹּאבֵד.
2 / ב
No matter how powerful the force, nothing can thwart G-d's will.
Our Sages comment that the psalm alludes to the encounter
between the nations and the Messiah.
א לָמָּה רָגְשׁוּ גוֹיִם, וּלְאֻמִּים יֶהְגּוּ רִיק.
ב יִתְיַצְּבוּ מַלְכֵי אֶרֶץ, וְרוֹזְנִים נוֹסְדוּ יָחַד,
5 / TEHILLIM/PSALMS – 3
SUNDAY – DAY 1
הִנָּסְרוּ שִׁפְטֵי אֶרֶץ. יא עִבְדוּ אֶת יְדוד
2 / תהלים – א
יום ראשון – יום א' לחודש
SUNDAY / יום ראשון
DAY 1 / יום א' לחודש
1 / א
The book of Psalms begins with a guide to life itself. Avoid the influence of evildoers and
those who ridicule good, and adopt the study and knowledge of Torah as your main
goal. Then G-d will reward you with a life of joy and good fortune.
א אַשְׁרֵי הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא הָלַךְ בַּעֲצַת
רְשָׁעִים, וּבְדֶרֶךְ חַטָּאִים* לֹא עָמָד,
וּבְמוֹשַׁב לֵצִים לֹא יָשָׁב. ב כִּי אִם בְּתוֹרַת
יְדוד חֶפְצוֹ, וּבְתוֹרָתוֹ* יֶהְגֶּה יוֹמָם וָלָיְלָה.
ג וְהָיָה כְּעֵץ שָׁתוּל עַל פַּלְגֵי מָיִם;*
אֲשֶׁר פִּרְיוֹ יִתֵּן בְּעִתּוֹ, וְעָלֵהוּ לֹא יִבּוֹל,*
4 / תהלים – ב
יום ראשון – יום א' לחודש
עַל יְדוד* וְעַל מְשִׁיחוֹ.
נְנַתְּקָה* אֶת מוֹסְרוֹתֵימוֹ,* וְנַשְׁלִיכָה מִמֶּנּוּ עֲבֹתֵימוֹ.
יוֹשֵׁב בַּשָּׁמַיִם יִשְׂחָק,* אֲדֹנָי יִלְעַג לָמוֹ.
אָז יְדַבֵּר אֵלֵימוֹ בְאַפּוֹ, וּבַחֲרוֹנוֹ יְבַהֲלֵמוֹ.
וַאֲנִי נָסַכְתִּי מַלְכִּי, עַל צִיּוֹן הַר קָדְשִׁי.
אֲסַפְּרָה אֶל חֹק, יְדוד אָמַר אֵלַי בְּנִי
אַתָּה,* אֲנִי הַיּוֹם יְלִדְתִּיךָ. שְׁאַל מִמֶּנִּי
וְאֶתְּנָה גוֹיִם נַחֲלָתֶךָ, וַאֲחֻזָּתְךָ אַפְסֵי
אֶרֶץ. תִּרְעֵם בְּשֵׁבֶט בַּרְזֶל, כִּכְלִי
יוֹצֵר תְּנַפְּצֵם. וְעַתָּה מְלָכִים הַשְׂכִּילוּ,*
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One aspect of *Fuzzy Math* is almost touching: Krugman's faith that if only the truth about the Bush plan got out, people would reject it in all its perfidy. "Nobody confronted with the actual numbers would accept [the Bush Treasury's] interpretation," he writes. The problem must be that "reporters and television commentators . . . don't understand the basics of the federal government: where the money comes from, where it goes, how Social Security works." No wonder the public is "confused."

This is nonsense. Whatever one may say of the Washington press corps and its pundits, with few exceptions they have an excellent command not just of the basics of the federal government but of the details. If the fact that the Bush tax cut gives the biggest dollar reduction to the highest earners went unnoticed in Princeton, New Jersey, it was not through any failure to report it on the part of the *New York Times* and every other newspaper and evening news broadcast in the land. In Washington, at least, not "nobody" but *everybody* was "confronted with the actual numbers." Some liked them, or at least did not mind them, and some disliked them. Krugman is so much at one with the latter that he is unable to look disinterestedly either at them or at their opponents.

Had the debate over the Bush tax cut gone on longer than it did, this book would have added little to it.

Lost Illusions

Commies:
A Journey Through the Old Left, the New Left, and the Leftover Left
by Ronald Radosh
Encounter. 216 pp. $24.95

Reviewed by
Ruth R. Wisse

IN THE early 1970's, when support groups were being formed for children of Holocaust survivors, it occurred to me—based on what I

RUTH R. WISSE, *professor of Yiddish literature and comparative literature at Harvard, is the author most recently of* The Modern Jewish Canon.

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knew of my contemporaries—that the needier candidates for collective counseling were the children of Communists. Survivors, after all, were morally in the clear, harmed by forces beyond their control, whereas Communists, having supported and covered for a murderous regime, had themselves been the forces of harm. Furthermore, survivors usually wanted the historical truth to be made known, while Communists demanded subterfuge and mendacity as a way of life, thus setting their children on a collision course with society. Finally, because Communism functioned like a cult, training its young through a network of associations, schools, and summer camps, it seemed to me that those raised in its orbit might uniquely benefit from the kind of therapy that encourages individuals to recognize what they have in common with others like themselves.

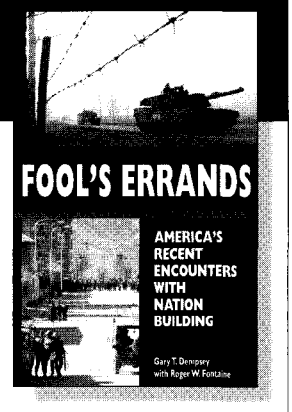
Of course, before any such therapy could begin, the children would have to acknowledge that they had inherited a problem. But in those years—despite the accumulating evidence of Soviet crimes—no signs of collective reappraisal were on the horizon. Instead, those raised in the organized Left were far more likely to be perpetuating their parents' opposition to American society through a widening "counterculture" that combined political protest with other forms of disaffection. Many "red-diaper" babies had been so shaped by the movement that they could not fashion an identity without it; indeed, the savagery with which they would freeze out any defectors from their ranks indicated how much they feared a life of autonomy.

Hence, even now, in the year 2001, it still takes a measure of courage for Ronald Radosh to affirm, in *Commies*, the political equivalent of the discovery that the world is round. Until the late 1970's, Radosh himself was a fairly typical child of the American Communist Left, attending the obligatory progressive schools and summer camps, absorbing the martyrological self-image of American Communism, joining the embryonic New Left as an undergraduate in the late 1950's, and eventually becoming a historian who championed the ideas of the American Left in the classroom. It was therefore only natural that when the government finally released the FBI files on the case of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, executed in 1952 for having passed atomic secrets to the Soviet Union, Radosh should have considered himself the person best qualified to examine the documents: as a "politically reliable" historian, he would finally be able to prove they had been framed.

Alas for his assumptions, the truthful historian came into conflict with the true believer. The result was *The Rosenberg File* (co-authored with Joyce Milton, 1983), which, although critical of the government's execution of Ethel, demonstrated that Julius Rosenberg had indeed been guilty of treason. For saying so, Radosh instantly became a pariah among his erstwhile comrades, an experience that inspired him to go on trying to set the record straight—as he does to striking effect in this book.

Radosh treats himself in *Commies* as something of a case study, invoking the personal to illuminate the political and pointing to the many historical ironies that his story throws into relief. Young Communists like himself, he writes, were brought up on twists of logic that they imbibed like mother's milk. As children, for example, they were taught that they should stand up for their parents' beliefs, thus demonstrating their independence from received opinion; but these "beliefs" themselves amounted merely to the current line from Moscow (and were

Is Nation Building a Mistake?



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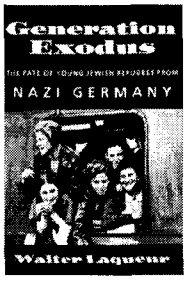

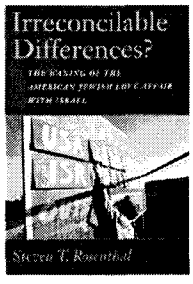

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subject to change at a moment's notice). Radosh recalls a classmate who brought to school a recording of Paul Robeson and was thrown out, with his record, when the teacher identified the famous black singer as a Communist. The leftist parent body duly protested this blatant demonstration of intolerance and repression—but, Radosh reminds us, the only reason Robeson was a hero to these parents in the first place was that he was a party loyalist who had kept silent about what he knew of Stalin's crimes. It was they, in other words, who were exploiting his race for their own political ends.

In 1955, young Radosh chose the University of Wisconsin at Madison because "it had no math requirement, and it was the only campus in the country with an openly recognized chapter of the [Communist party's] Labor Youth League." Fair enough; everyone is entitled to seek a friendly campus, and to pursue the extracurricular interests of his choice. But LYL was not your typical interest group:

> [I]f all we had done was try to obtain a forum for the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, we might have been carrying out a valid intellectual function, that of promoting free debate in the marketplace of ideas. But in fact our objective was classically Leninist: to gain influence in, and if possible take over, other existing student groups.

Convinced that their methods were justified by their superior political ideals, the fewer than 100 members of LYL infiltrated such groups as the NAACP, the Young Democrats, the Film Society, and the Student Council, trying to kindle a socialist revolution. While the FBI was busy tracking the young Radosh's public activities, such as distributing copies of the party's *Daily Worker* to unionized meat packers (who ignored them), he himself was using the cover of democratic organizations to work for the overthrow of democracy.

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This was the very sort of thing that the philosopher (and former Marxist) Sidney Hook was then targeting in his attempt to protect academic freedom. Communists, Hook argued, were perfectly entitled to try to win adherents through the arts of persuasion, but Communist faculty members in universities were not entitled to "inject" Marxism-Leninism into their teaching, as the official instructions of the party bade them do, without identifying themselves as spokesmen for the party line. Although Radosh does not address this argument directly, he demonstrates in the most valuable part of his book how what Hook feared eventually came to pass, and on a scale Hook could not have imagined.

This occurred only after the cultic purity of the Old Left had yielded to the freer-flowing radicalism of the New Left. As long as American Communists had continued to take their orders from Moscow, their clumsy zig-zagging put a curb on the influence they were able to exert. But when Radosh and others like him succeeded in prying radicalism free of doctrinaire constraints, it flooded the university and from there seeped into the wider culture.

As both a participant in and an observer of this process, Radosh is in a good position to show how the various protest movements of the 1960's and 70's combined to indict America for committing precisely those violations of human freedom that Communism itself specialized in. Thus, out of the movement for civil rights and equal opportunity came the violent revolutionism of the Black Panthers; opposition to the war in Vietnam yielded the caricature of a fascist-imperialist "Amerika"; the culture of drugs not only encouraged the young to "turn on, tune in, drop out" but transformed youthful suburban users into moral and psychological enemies of democratic society; women's liberation invented a factitious gender war between males and females to which it then applied the Marxist rhetoric of class conflict; and so forth.

Of particular interest is Radosh's focus on the role of music, especially the neo-folk variety, in the formation of the radical consciousness of the times. As one who was himself raised on the music of Pete Seeger, known as "the Karl Marx of the teenagers," Radosh later witnessed the emergence of a new generation of troubadours like Bob Dylan and Joan Baez who gave American youngsters both a vocabulary of protest and the thrill of participating in up-to-date forms of "mass demonstration." At a

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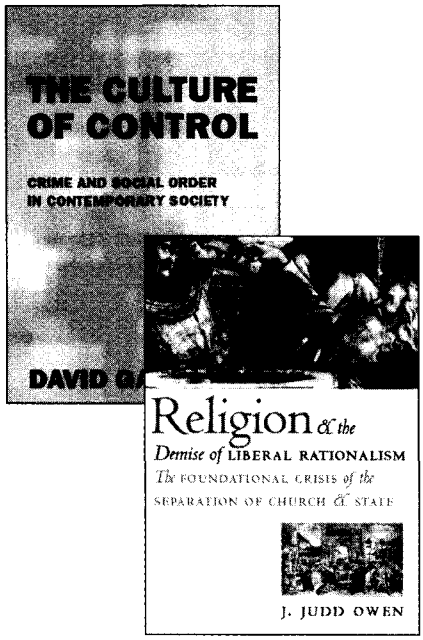
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rally in 1970, just after the shooting of four student protesters at Kent State University in Ohio, Radosh seized the microphone from the dean of his college and whipped the crowd into a frenzy by chanting the words of a song by Jefferson Airplane, "Got to Revolution, Got to Revolution." Much as Lenin had done to the Russian Constituent Assembly, the New Left outmuscled the American "establishment," including American liberals, by threatening it with the power of "the people."

RADOSH IS less rueful than might be expected of someone who became disillusioned with the movement just when it was enjoying its widest appeal—and then paid a high price for his disaffection. His book is wryly funny, exceptionally good-humored, and never rancorous, not even when he is recalling how friends slurred and repudiated him once he began to question the sanctity of Castro's revolution in Cuba and the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. In fact, Radosh tried hard, and for as long as he could, to remain a critic from within, until the point in the early 1990's when the editorial board of the social-democratic magazine *Dissent*, on which he was still serving, moved to oust him for an essay (published elsewhere) in which he argued that had the Communists triumphed in Spain in the late 1930's, life there would have been far worse than it proved to be under Franco.

Despite his candid and generous testimony, and his careful attention to the many ironies of his experience, certain ironies still seem to elude Radosh. Chief among them is the way that Jewish families like his managed to create, in their fidelity to Communism, a much more sectarian and repressive culture than the allegedly sectarian and repressive one they had abandoned. For the youthful Radosh as for his good friend David Horowitz—who gave a harsher account of his break with the Left in his 1997 autobiography, *Radical Son*—radicalism was an attempt to perpetuate the "secular religion" of their parents, but this was a religion that had sacrificed every single one of the values that flowed from a concept of human beings created in God's image. In the certainty that they were improving on Judaism, the parents wrenched their children from the moorings of a civilization promoting good in favor of a system promoting evil.

Communism and fellow traveling are not a legacy from which individuals can easily free themselves on their own, or there would be more books like this one. What *Commies* suggests is that it is high time for someone to organize those support groups I mentioned at the outset—if not for the sake of the children, then for the sake of the grandchildren.

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New World Order

Stay the Hand of Vengeance: The Politics of War Crimes Tribunals

by Gary Jonathan Bass

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Reviewed by
Nicholas Rostow

OVER THE last two centuries, the international community has developed a body of law governing armed conflict. Its purpose is not to prevent war but to mitigate its horrors by setting forth rules of conduct for combatants. The rules consist of specific treaties, like the 1949 Geneva Conventions, which have become part of customary law: that is, they are binding on all states whether or not they are parties to those conventions. They impose duties on states to educate their armed forces and to enforce the law against alleged violators—war criminals—no matter what their nationality.

Historically, enforcement of the laws of war most often has come about through reciprocity; a combatant, having taken prisoners, can threaten to do something unpleasant to them if the other combatant fails to treat properly the prisoners under its own charge. But a new means of enforcement—war-crimes trials—emerged on an ad-hoc basis after World Wars I and II. Since then, the United Nations has established two more ad-hoc tribunals in the different circumstances of Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. Finally, there has been much agitation to create, independently of the UN, an International Criminal Court to deal with these and related matters.

In *Stay the Hand of Vengeance*, Gary Jonathan Bass has now at-

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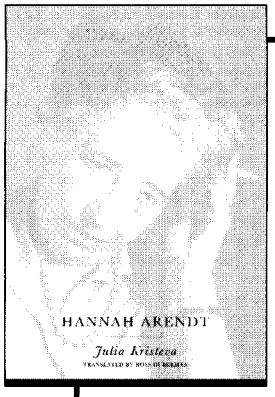
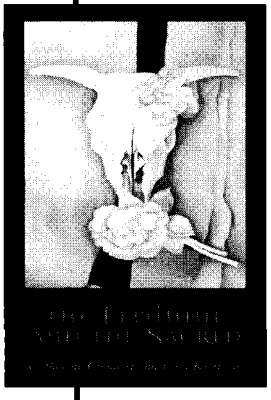
tempted to place the entire question of war-crimes tribunals in historical perspective and to clarify what they can and cannot accomplish. A former correspondent for the *Economist* who now teaches politics at Princeton, Bass writes crisply about five separate cases, beginning with the treatment of Napoleon after his final defeat in 1815 and ending with the movement in the late 1990's to prosecute war crimes in Bosnia. As one who covered the latter events as a journalist, Bass sometimes has difficulty maintaining an objective voice or restraining his own avenging impulses when dealing with the behind-the-scene politicking that led up to the creation of the Hague tribunal. (One of his book's dedicatees is "The People of Bosnia, Too Late.") But that is not the biggest problem with this work, which in the end does not so much dispel as deepen confusion over the function and purpose of war-crimes trials.

Although the banishment of Napoleon serves as the starting point of Bass's discussion—it formed, he argues, a significant first step toward the "legalist" approach to war crimes—in fact the former emperor was never put on trial before being exiled to St. Helena. Only with the second of Bass's cases, World War I, do we approach his subject directly. The awful carnage of that conflict fueled a desire on the part of the victorious Allies to hold the Kaiser responsible for having launched the war; accordingly, charges were brought before the German Supreme Court in Leipzig, with the British, French, Belgians, Italians, and others supplying lists of accused.

But the Kaiser himself never faced his accusers, and despite guilty verdicts handed down against other Germans, the Allies were left unsatisfied that justice had been done. Nor did the trials sit well with the German public, becoming instead part of the burdens borne by the Weimar Republic. For all these reasons, Bass tends to agree with Winston Churchill and others that the Leipzig war-crimes trials were a "disaster," if not, indeed, proof of the "folly of entrusting a political problem to legal methods."

The third of Bass's case studies—the British-led effort to try Turks responsible for the massacre of Armenians in 1915—is also the most arresting, being a subject relatively neglected by scholars. Under British pressure, the Ottoman empire after the war conducted special trials of





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persons accused of genocide, and in 1919 a court did succeed in convicting two defendants for crimes "against humanity and civilization," one of whom was hanged. But the sultanate was too weak to see the process through; two years later, others among the accused Turks were traded by the British for prisoners being held by Kemal Atatürk. This, suggests Bass, was neither the first nor the last time a "liberal" government would prove unwilling to risk the lives of its forces in order to see international criminals punished.

Unlike the trials after World War I, the Nuremberg trials—Bass's fourth example—were conducted in the context of unconditional surrender and occupation, and in method they have provided a model for such trials ever since. This is so even though, at Nuremberg, there was no mechanism for appeals and even though both the prosecutors and the judges came from the ranks of the victorious Allies, not all of whom had clean hands themselves. The point for Bass is that, whereas Stalin proposed summary executions of those accused, the Americans and eventually the British favored the application of norms prevailing in their own domestic legal systems: the trials, in other words, were just because they rested on procedures identified as just in liberal-democratic societies.

Which brings us to the final case, the Hague tribunal for war crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia. (Bass also pauses to note the international tribunal convened for Rwanda.) In contrast to the situation after World Wars I and II, a crucial ingredient was missing when it came to Bosnia: "public opinion in the major democracies was not outraged enough at the slaughter . . . to apply the kind of overwhelming pressure" that had earlier "pushed liberal governments . . . to seek vengeance for crimes against their own citizens." Hence, Bass writes with some heat, leaders "like Bill Clinton and John Major, so solicitous of their own troops, showed an extraordinary ability to shrug off Bosnia's destruction." Only by dint of the extraordinary efforts of activists and a few diplomats, including Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, were a number of major Serbian suspects arrested for war crimes, while others are still at large and may remain so.

THERE IS something to be said for Bass's exercise in historical reconstruction, or at least for isolated parts of it. But *Stay the Hand of Vengeance* is also beset with conceptual difficulties, of which the greatest may be Bass's apparent inability to decide whether his subject is the behavior of different governments when confronting war crimes or the processes of legal development—whether, in other words, his subject is politics or law.

Bass believes that international justice consists in punishing aggressors and war criminals as the only way to compensate for lives lost. Toward that end, democratic governments, which depend on and function according to the rule of law, and are responsive to public opinion, are to be commended for relying on trial procedures, at least when those procedures accomplish the ends Bass favors. But when they fall short—as the trials after World War I fell short—he appears to wish for more arbitrary and summary measures.

The problem is that once one decides to mete out justice, one necessarily appeals to law, and law means lawyers, due process, and all the rest. At times, Bass recognizes and extols this fact; at other times, he seems to head off in the opposite direction, calling not for staying but rather for loosing the hand of vengeance.

But that is not the end of it. If "legalism" can be frustrating, politics is no less so. Bass indicates his disgust at the willingness of the British to give over the Turks accused of having assisted in genocide, and at the failure of Messrs. Clinton and Major to act with the desired dispatch in Bosnia. In the latter case, indeed, Bass's outrage seems to be directed at the rules of war themselves, as if they should properly function to prevent conflict in the first place rather than, as I noted at the outset, to mitigate its horrors. What he is really upset about, in any case, is the dilatory pace of Western military *intervention* in Bosnia, which is quite a different thing from the trial and punishment of wrongdoers after a war has ended.

Finally, Bass does not appear to understand the degree to which the current push for the internationalization of war-crimes tribunals may cut against exactly the sort of justice he advocates, namely, justice of the Western, liberal variety. Both the Hague and the Rwanda tribunals were creations not of the victors but of the international community embodied in the United Nations. As such they were legal innovations, albeit ones that have now also served as models for the International Criminal Court aborning. Whether such new institutions will be a success in Bass's terms remains in question; any final judgment will certainly have to take into account the degree to which they do, and do not, honor due process. Given the present predilections of the "international community," as evidenced by the recent removal of the United States from the UN Commission on Human Rights, it is difficult to be optimistic in this regard.

Stay the Hand of Vengeance helpfully reminds us that international war-crimes trials are not a new historical phenomenon. They have always proved to be useful steps in the uneven progress toward increased respect for the rule of law in the international community. But they have not always been the most important steps. Ultimately, in war, there is no substitute for victory. Where democracy and the rule of law are at stake, this truism is doubly true.

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Disorderly Conduct

The Illusion of Order:
The False Promise of Broken Windows Policing
by Bernard E. Harcourt
Harvard. 287 pp. $35.00

Reviewed by
Brian C. Anderson

Less than a decade ago, New York was the most dangerous city in America, averaging more than 2,000 murders and 400,000 serious felonies a year. Today, it is widely considered one of the safest, with the overall crime rate having plummeted almost 60 percent since 1993, including a 65-percent drop in the incidence of murder. Thanks in part to this turnaround, businesses that fled in droves during the late 1980's and early 1990's have come back; the city's population, after shrinking for decades, is growing; and neighborhoods once considered lost to blight and disorder are now flourishing.

The primary reason for this change in the city's fortunes, many observers believe, has been the new approach to crime that Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and his then-police commissioner William Bratton brought to the New York Police Department (NYPD) shortly after Giuliani took office in 1994. The heart of this approach was "broken-windows" policing, an idea developed by the social scientists James Q. Wilson and George Kelling. In Wilson and Kelling's view, a causal link exists between street disorder and serious crime: a society that tolerates "quality-of-life" crimes like aggressive panhandling, prostitution, and public drinking signals to *all* potential wrongdoers that no one is in charge, and that they can get away with anything. Conversely, cracking down on such lower-level infractions, as New York has done for the last seven years, makes it clear to would-be criminals that law enforcement is watching, thus helping to deter them.

Though broken-windows policing has been popular with politicians and the public—and has been emulated by police forces from New Orleans to Caracas, Venezuela—not everybody thinks it is a good idea. Left-wing academics have been particularly agitated, for the new approach to policing seemingly explodes the liberal shibboleth that nothing can be done about crime without addressing its "root causes" in poverty and racism. In *The Illusion of Order*, University of Arizona law professor Bernard E. Harcourt launches the most comprehensive attempt yet to discredit this revolution in policing. His main target: the vaunted success of the NYPD.

Despite repeated claims that the broken-windows theory has been empirically verified, there is, Harcourt argues, "no reliable evidence" that disorder causes crime. The study most often cited as proof suffers in his view from cripplingly weak and inconsistent data. As for New York, broken-windows policing had little or nothing to do with its celebrated drop in crime. Far more important, according to Harcourt, were the end of the crack-cocaine epidemic, a booming economy, and a population with fewer males between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four. Indeed, cities like San Diego and San Francisco saw crime fall throughout the 1990's at rates comparable to New York's, but without resorting to the same anti-crime strategy.

Besides, even if broken-windows policing *has* contributed in some small way to a lower crime rate in New York, the overall result, Harcourt believes, has been a frightening increase of police surveillance, power, and abuse. Law enforcement has now extended its reach into every corner of the city, resulting in as many as 80,000 new arrests a year. At the same time, he writes, there has been a "significant increase" in civilian complaints against the NYPD, with African-Americans bearing the brunt of the new war on crime. This is visible not only in such bloody instances of police wrongdoing as the cases of Abner Louima and Amadou Diallo but, more generally, in the city's eagerness to further the "stereotyping of black criminality."

But the real problem with broken-windows policing extends beyond such street-level considerations to the way in which it encourages us to define criminality itself. In Harcourt's view, we have too readily accepted "an uncritical dichotomy between disorderly people and law abiders." After all, he argues (taking his cue from the radical French philosopher Michel Foucault), notions of order and disorder are mere "social constructs," with no reality independent of the preferences of those in authority. Hobos and winos, for example, used to be considered society's harmless "losers"—nuisances, to be sure, but hardly deserving of police attention. Now, thanks to the proponents of broken-windows policing, they are seen as agents of crime and urban decay who need to be "controlled or banished." The new policing, Harcourt charges, has *created* the very threat to society it seeks to get rid of.

And who is to say, in the end, that the values of the "law abiders" deserve more respect than those of the "disorderly"? Perhaps the problem is not with them but with us. "Urinating in the street," Harcourt writes, "signals that rules have broken down *only if* the meaning of public urination is associated with rule-breaking."

Needless to say, there are more and less serious parts of this relentless indictment. It is true, as Harcourt charges, that social scientists have yet to prove definitively that

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disorder causes crime; considering the limits of social science, it is unlikely that they ever will. More important, one would think, is the fact that wherever broken-windows policies have been adopted, crime has fallen—a real-world correlation that holds not just for New York but for many other big cities as well, including San Francisco, which (contra Harcourt) was among the first to adopt this new philosophy of policing. Nor is it surprising that a relatively small, affluent, majority-white city like San Diego has made progress against crime without the broken-windows strategy: street disorder has never been much of a problem there.

As for Harcourt's alternative explanations for New York's precipitous drop in crime, they simply do not stand up to scrutiny. Was it the city's flourishing economy? Probably not, since for much of the period New York's unemployment rate remained at nearly double the national average. A shift in the city's demographics? Unlikely, since the minority teen population—a group that commits a disproportionate number of crimes—actually increased over the last decade. A drop in the use of crack? Hardly decisive, since drug use as a whole has remained about the same since the early 1990's.

For Harcourt, in any case, explaining New York's drop in crime is a less pressing task than demonizing Giuliani and the NYPD. But what he ignores is the range of indicators suggesting that, far from becoming more repressive or uncontrolled, the NYPD has been transformed in recent years into one of the least violent and most professional big-city police forces in the country.

Although the ratio of civilian complaints per officer went up immediately after Giuliani took office, this is hardly the whole story. In recent years, and despite much more frequent interaction between the police and the public, the ratio has fallen steadily, and today it is no higher than before the advent of broken-windows policing.

Perhaps more important, New Yorkers now lodge far fewer complaints concerning the use of excessive force than they did in the mid-1980's, and police shootings are at their lowest level in almost three decades. Nor, finally, has the NYPD treated blacks unjustly. The percentage of blacks arrested or stopped and frisked by police is actually lower than the percentage of criminal suspects identified as black by victims.

None of this is to deny that there has been tension between minorities and the police in New York. But as residents in predominantly minority neighborhoods like Central Harlem will attest, *they* have been the biggest beneficiaries of the new gains in public safety. They know—as perhaps only a professor from sunny, distant Arizona cannot—that the problems once posed to their daily lives by hookers, drug-pushers, and homeless people were quite real, and that their outrage over such things as public urination was anything but a "social construct" imposed from above.

A Jewish Plot?

Hollywood and Anti-Semitism:
A Cultural History
Up to World War II
by Steven Alan Carr
Cambridge. 342 pp. $69.95

Reviewed by
Rhoda Rabkin

ONE DAY in the early 20th century, a young man named Adolph Zukor looked around at the "moving pictures" in his Manhattan penny arcade and said to himself: "A Jew could make a lot of money at this." Other aspiring entrepreneurs, with names like Goldwyn, Fox, Loew, Mayer, and Warner, had the same idea. Lengthening those early shorts, adding stories and recognizable actors, eventually adding sound, these men transformed a faddish novelty amusement into a lasting, wildly popular form of entertainment. They became wealthy and powerful.

Too powerful, some believed. In *Hollywood and Anti-Semitism*, Steven Alan Carr, a professor at Indiana University, traces the rise and eventual fall of the idea that Jews not only dominated the movie business but were exploiting their control for nefarious purposes. This idea emerged, he shows, in the years before the Great Depression, just as the film industry was being born, when ancient stereotypes of Jews as Judas and Shylock converged with a growing antipathy toward immigrants, making "Jewish influence" seem a logical explanation for unwelcome changes that were taking place in American society.

Among the pieces of evidence Carr adduces are vicious cartoon caricatures of Jews in *Life*, a humor magazine of the era (no relation to the later weekly of the same name), and a boys' novel, *Tom Swift and His Talking Pictures* (1928), whose hero battles sinister Jewish film moguls and their agent—an anarchist by the name of Jacob Greenbaum—for control of a futuristic invention: television. Carr also discusses the most important anti-Semitic voice of the period, the automobile magnate Henry Ford, whose newspaper, the *Dearborn Independent* (which Ford dealers were required to stock), carried allegations of Jewish conspiracy and quotations from *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* to every corner of America.

By the 1930's, the volume of anti-Semitic rhetoric in the U.S. had assumed alarming proportions, and much of it centered on Jewish influence in Hollywood. The venom

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spouted over the airwaves by the likes of Father Charles E. Coughlin is only the most familiar part of the story. Lesser known figures included the embittered ex-screenwriter William Pelley, who founded a Nazi-style organization called the Silver Shirts and edited *Liberation*, a magazine that raved against Jews and supported Hitler.

As Carr recounts, Jewish film producers responded to the various attacks on them—among their critics, by now, were also citizens' groups up in arms about the salaciousness and/or the irreligiosity of Hollywood products—by trying to address the substance of the complaints while ignoring the anti-Semitic language in which they were frequently couched. Where possible, the producers also sought compromise with their critics, most notably by agreeing to a system of self-censorship, formalized in the 1930 Production Code, which set guidelines for handling sensitive matters. On occasion they also took the offensive, for instance by sponsoring the infiltration of organizations like the Silver Shirts.

With the eruption of World War II, the conflict between Hollywood and its various critics reached its climax. In September 1941, the aviator and leading isolationist Charles Lindbergh could still feel free to declare that the "greatest danger to this country lies in [the Jews'] large ownership and influence in our motion pictures." But three months later came the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, America's entry into the war, and Lindbergh's final fall from grace. Similarly, as more and more Americans became aware of what was happening in Hitler's Europe, an initiative like Senator Gerald P. Nye's investigation into "motion-picture propaganda" turned into a severe political liability.

Though Carr's book is subtitled "a cultural history up to World War II," he closes his account by examining various governmental actions involving Hollywood both during the war itself and in the postwar years. These ranged from the Justice Department's antitrust suits that commenced in 1939 through the postwar hearings of the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) into Communist infiltration of the movie industry. Both at the time and since, these hearings were denounced as nothing more than anti-Semitism in disguise.

Hollywood and Anti-Semitism is replete with fascinating material from over a half-century of American history. It is also replete with references on virtually every page to an unfortunate explanatory device that Carr calls the "Hollywood Question." This he identifies as an up-

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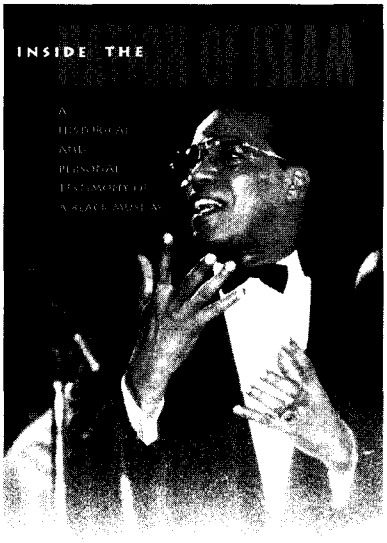

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dated version of the question posed by some Europeans in the wake of the emancipation of the Jews in the 19th century:

> Instead of overtly asking whether Jews can participate in the regular affairs of daily life, the Hollywood Question asks whether Jews, given their quasi-racialized difference, should participate in the regular affairs of mediated life.

Carr himself describes his concept as "incredibly protean" and "uniquely versatile"—so protean, and so versatile, one might say, that it manages to explain next to nothing while blurring almost every important distinction. Thus, to Carr, both the isolationist rhetoric of Lindbergh and the anti-Communist rhetoric of HUAC were manifestations of the same "Hollywood Question"—that is, of anti-Semitism—with HUAC's hearings merely venting the poison in a socially acceptable form. In fact, however, anti-Semitism and anti-Communism were different phenomena, with different roots.

HUAC, whatever one might think about its methods, investigated the real activities of individuals thought to be loyal to a foreign power, not imaginary "conspiracies" conjured up by anti-Semites like Henry Ford and Father Coughlin. It is true that when the group of screenwriters known as the "Hollywood Ten" were summoned before the committee in 1947, a number of them seemed eager to draw attention to their Jewishness. One, Arthur Maltz, refused to answer whether he belonged to the Communist-linked Screen Writers Guild, saying: "Next you are going to ask me what religion I belong to." Another, Sam Ornitz, led off with: "I wish to address this committee as a Jew."

To much of the public, however, it seemed plain that the Ten were merely being evasive, and probably because they *were* Communists, followers of a political line set by Stalin, a fact they were trying to hide by "exposing" the hearings as tainted by anti-Semitism. The strategy was a PR disaster, and in time most liberal support for the Hollywood Ten dissipated.

Another important distinction erased by *Hollywood and Anti-Semitism* is the one between criticism of films for their content and criticism of film producers for their ethnicity. In discussing the industry's self-imposed Production Code Administration (PCA), Carr writes that Hollywood "relinquish[ed] control of film content to religious anti-Semitism." This is wildly off the mark. To modern ears, the PCA rules often sound priggish, and they may even evince a Catholic sensibility. But however problematic they may have been, Americans were right to think then (as many do now) that movies were a powerful cultural force, shaping as well as being shaped by public attitudes, and hence legitimate objects of public criticism. Although anti-Semites were among those protesting, protesting itself was, and is, hardly anti-Semitic.

THESE DAYS, Americans debate the issue of cultural standards and norms of public decency without being distracted by the pseudo-issue of "Jewish control" over the movies. That is assuredly all to the good, both for Jews and for everyone else. But the problems that the more honest critics of Hollywood pointed to back then also became much more severe over the decades, raising the question of whether it is possible to maintain any kind of public standard of decency in a commercial society like ours. If the answer to this question is no, that is assuredly all to the bad, for Jews and everyone else.

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Arnold Beichman is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.

George Orwell wrote, "He who controls the past controls the future." Some of the most distinguished American historians are working hard to "control" the past by proving, to state it simply, that the United States did not win the cold war. Why? So that when our children and their children read their history textbooks they will never know that the democracies, led by the United States and a popular two-term president, Ronald Reagan, triumphed over Soviet totalitarianism.

Liberal academic opinion has created the fiction that nobody won the cold war. But there is no more Soviet Union, no Berlin Wall, no Gulag. Never mind. The United States did not "win" the cold war, period.

Weird. Everybody agrees that the Allies beat Germany in two world wars and that the United States lost in Vietnam. But when it comes to the question of who triumphed in the cold war, a great smog immediately blankets the question. George Kennan, for example, writes: "Nobody 'won' the cold war." Thirty years ago, however, he wrote, "The retraction of Soviet power from its present bloated and unhealthy limits is essential to the stability of world relationships."

Here it is thirty years later. There is no Soviet power; its "bloated and unhealthy limits" have been retracted without bloodshed. There isn't even a Soviet Union. So didn't the democracies win the cold war? The problem with Kennan and his revisionist followers is that they never tell you how they define victory.

Professor Ronald Steel has written this grudging verdict on the end of Soviet totalitarianism: "We have won a victory, of sorts." Of sorts! Would Professor Steel describe our triumph over fascism as "a victory, of sorts"?

Professor Steel seems to regret the end of the cold war; he writes, "In its perverted way, the cold war was a force for stability." Yes indeed—Afghanistan, Cuban missile crisis, uprisings in East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia—some force for stability. On the other hand, the cold war was, he says, "dangerous, wasteful, obsessive, and at times irrational." So take your pick.

Ask Russians who won the cold war and their replies are unequivocal. Vladimir Lukin, onetime Boris Yeltsin foreign policy adviser; Aleksandr Bessmertnykh, former Russian foreign minister; Sergio Khrushchev, son of Nikita S. Khrushchev who recently became a U.S. citizen, all agree that the United States won the cold war.

Operation Rewrite about the cold war, in full swing for a decade, has produced books like *Losing Our Souls: The American Experience in the Cold War,* by Professor Edward Pessen, or an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education,* by a Whitman College academic, titled "The United States Was the Loser in the Cold War" containing this hallucinatory sentence: "Considering what might have been, the United States was the loser in the cold war, not the winner."

All these exhibits reminded me of Jonathan Swift's observation in *Gulliver's Travels:* "there is nothing so extravagant and irrational which some philosophers have not maintained for truth." Ditto some historians.

— Arnold Beichman

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A world of ideas on public policy.

Burying the big population story

by Ben J. Wattenberg

The overwhelming demographic story of our time has somehow failed to make it into the headlines. Here it is, in short: Never have birth and fertility rates fallen so far, so fast, so low, for so long, all over the world, already yielding some population decline, with much more to come. That story continues to be buried by the noise of "the population explosion", a powerful trend that peaked decades ago, but which is still promoted by environmental alarmists and their allies.

Recently, however, the United Nations Population Division had started "unburying" the facts. Some projection techniques were modified to partially account for starkly falling fertility. The UN's "Replacement Migration: Is it a Solution to Declining and Aging Populations?" caused a firestorm. It predicted that European nations will either take in large numbers of immigrants, or suffer grievous economic damages.

But now, alas, the recent release of the "highlights" of the new UN biennial reference book "World Population Prospects – The 2000 Revisions", once again buries the big story. That is too bad, because only the UN has the standing to correct the central misconception of our time.

Consider the gist of the first four items of the executive summary of the document. World population is growing by 77 million per year, going from 6.1 billion today to 9.3 billion in 2050, according to the "medium variant" projection. The gain will come entirely in the Less Developed Regions (LDR), even though the LDR "projection assumes continuing declines in fertility". The population of the modern "More Developed Regions" (MDR) is "anticipated to change little". The 2050 global projection comes out at 413 million more people than previously reported.

Shouldn't we be investing more in improving healthcare and education in the less developed regions where populations are growing?

"More people" was the functional UN lead, and that is how the Associated Press, among other news organizations, reported the story. But saying that developed nations won't lose population in the next 50 years is simply not accurate. Europe, Japan and almost every other developed country will suffer severe population losses, while the United States is projected to grow.

Thus, the 2000 population of Europe is 727 million and the UN's "medium" projection for 2050 is 603 million – a loss of 124 million people or 17%, an unprecedented drop. The "low" (and probably more likely) projection puts Europe at 556 million – a loss of 171 million or 24%.

America, on the other hand, is slated to grow from 283 million today to 397 million in 2050. But that American projection assumes increasing fertility and immigration, which is dubious. American fertility has been below the replacement rate of 2.1 children per woman for 30 consecutive years. Why would it go up? It is equally unlikely that immigration will go up, given trends elsewhere. Demographers say that Mexico, for example, has already breached the 2.1 rate, down from a 1965-70 rate of 6.8 children. Like Mexico, there are already 21 nations from the LDR that have fertility rates below the replacement rate, including China, Thailand, Cuba, both North and South Korea, and Kazakhstan.

The problem is not that the UN has made poor projections, but that it labels fairly high projections as "medium". That word is immediately misinterpreted as "most likely", and in the media it is then further transmuted into "fact". And so we read that the UN is predicting that the world population will rise from about 6 billion to about 9 billion and keep growing – instead of a more likely course of going from 6 billion to about 8 billion and declining.

There is a big difference between growing and declining, especially when we consider the serious policy implications of population decline. How will the developed countries sustain their healthcare and pension systems if their populations are aging even more rapidly than we had thought? And shouldn't we be investing more – much more – in improving healthcare and education in the less developed regions where populations are growing? Reporting growth when the likelihood is decline postpones consideration of these serious issues. And that is why burying the big story can be dangerous.

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